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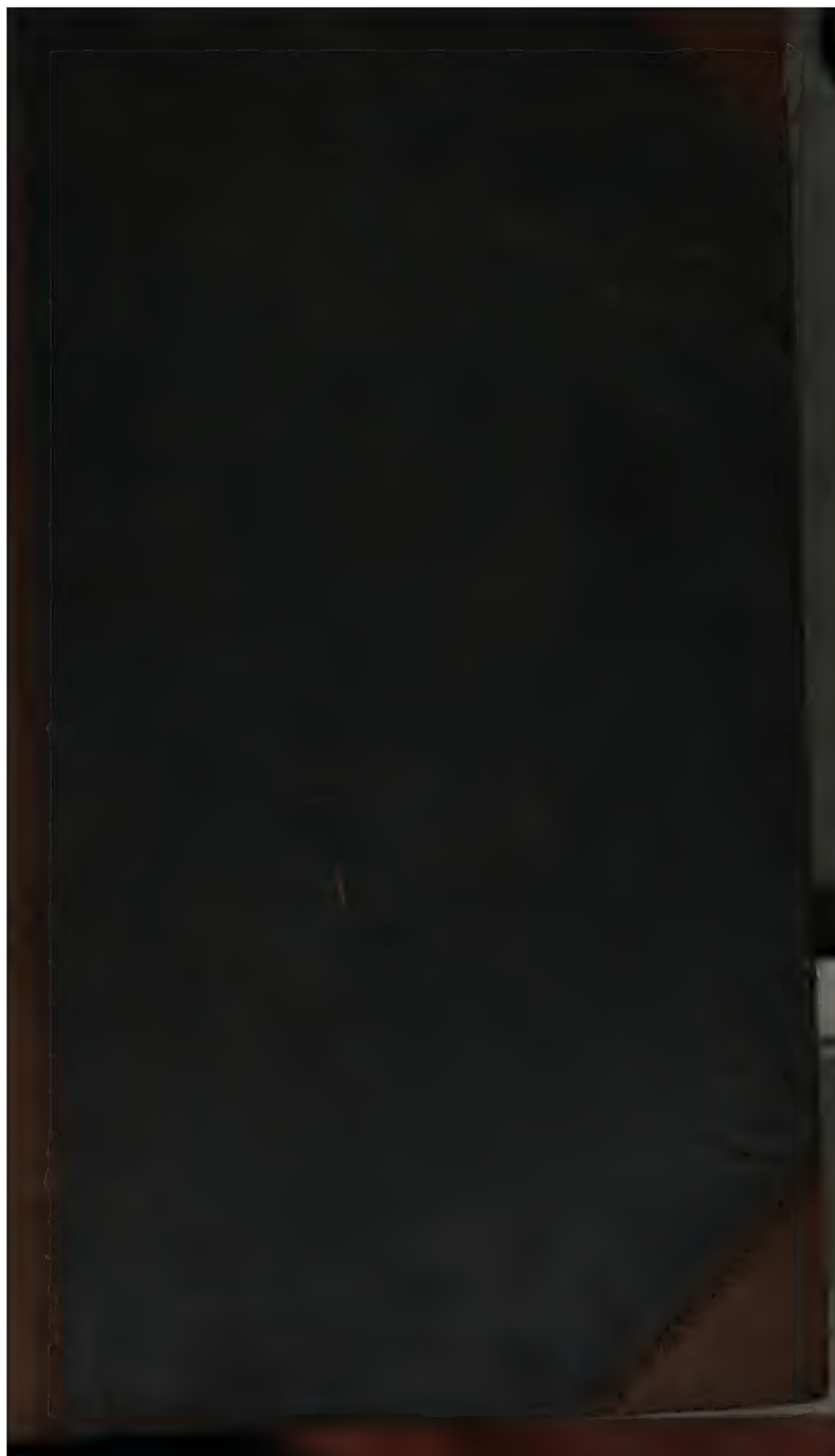
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THE FORSAKEN.

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THE
F O R S A K E N.

A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE FORSAKEN.

CHAPTER I.

MR. O'GRADY was one of a highly respectable family, of considerable opulence in Ireland, and had been called to the bar early in life, where he acquired a name of some celebrity, and amassed a considerable property; which was afterwards much increased by the death of a friend, who bequeathed to him a handsome house in Dublin, and some thousands per annum.

Mr. O'Grady was rather advanced in life when he married; and, on doing so, retired from the pursuit of his profession, and gave himself up to the indulgence of various whims and oddities, which had been kept in subjection during

the busier part of his existence ; and found most particular pleasure in the execution of plans and projects the most extraordinary and out of the way that can be possibly imagined.

His house in Merrion Square was a most strange and wonderful concern, furnished and decorated in a manner that never failed to draw smiles from the countenances of his most attached friends and well-wishers ; who, however, could not avoid loving him, notwithstanding his peculiar propensities.

He was, without doubt, an excellent hearted man, kind, courteous, and benevolent ; and from mixing, during a long life, in polished and well-bred society, bore the stamp of gentleman-like manners, manners now gone by, and if perchance ever met with in the present march of intellect, only laughed at as those of a tiresome and obsolete old school.

He was one day sauntering slowly along the beautiful quays of our lovely though deserted capital, when he met a gentleman with whom he was well acquainted, and for whom he had con-

ducted several suits during his professional career. Glad to encounter an old friend, the counsellor (as he was still called by most of his associates, from habit) took the arm of Captain O'Sullivan, and kindly inquired into the state of his affairs and worldly concerns, as years had elapsed since they had met, or since he had been heard of.

The Captain replied to the numerous interrogations of Mr. O'Grady with seeming gaiety and good spirits; and when their walk brought them into the yard of the Four Courts, he asked Mr. O'Grady to accompany him into the Rolls Court for a few moments. On doing so, Mr. O'Grady (who still loved to frequent his former haunts) was going to address an old acquaintance on some indifferent subject, when Captain O'Sullivan asked him not to delay, but lend his assistance as a friend to a cause of his, which was that moment pending. With much pleasure Mr. O'Grady at once consented, and found that he was only required to puff a property of Sullivan's, which was to be sold at the

suit of a creditor; and which the Captain whispered to O'Grady was of considerable value; and would in all probability be knocked down to his opponent, at a considerable loss to him; he added, his feelings were too acute at the time to allow him to appear in the business; he therefore implored his kind-hearted adviser of former days to raise it as high as he possibly could; and at all events, to rescue it out of the hands of his adversary, as he had funds within his power to redeem it, though he wished that to be secret.

Thinking little of what he was about, Mr. O'Grady acquiesced, and out-bid a person whom he was led to suppose was the enemy of O'Sullivan. He bid, and bid, determined to aid his treacherous friend as much as he could, and, at what he imagined to be a trifling act of friendship; and had the gratification of hearing himself named as the possessor and purchaser of the estate, at the sum of Ten Thousand Pounds.

When the business was concluded, Mr. O'Gra-

dy hastened to Captain O'Sullivan, and, shaking hands with him most warmly, wished him joy of his victory over Mr. Delang, his greedy and rapacious creditor.

"Yes, indeed, my friend," replied the wily Captain, "we have indeed done well, and you have behaved most handsomely and liberally to me; I never thought you would have gone so far as you did."

"Why, my dear Sullivan, certainly I could not repress a smile, at the gravity with which many of my old chums regarded me, as they heard me rise from hundred to hundred, until I fairly beat that sneaking looking fellow who was out-bidding me from the field."

"Surely, Counsellor, it was a most fortunate circumstance for me that I met you to-day, so kind a friend, and so wealthy a man; my inheritance would have passed away from me for nothing, to a stranger; believe me, that there is not another being in existence that I would rather see my successor, or to whom I would so readily and gladly yield up my property."

“ Indeed, Sullivan, I am most happy to have been enabled to serve you in any way ; and most particularly glad that you will have it in your power to redeem your lands. Allow me to say, likewise, as a sincere friend and well-wisher, that I would advise you to arrange your affairs as quickly as possible, and quit Dublin at least for some time, where, forgive me for adding, you have lived so extravagantly and ridiculously. Stay on the Continent for a few years, and endeavour, by economy and travelling, to increase your purse, and enlarge your mind.”

“ I assure you I have been thinking of doing so, and shall decidedly follow your advice as soon as it shall be made convenient, by your paying me the purchase-money (or part of it) as soon as you can ; and as soon as I get out of the hands of attorneys, who have one and all nearly ruined me.”

“ Oh, you know, O’Sullivan, as you have out-bid your creditor, and are become the purchaser of what you so rashly squandered, it rests with you to raise the money as best you can,

for, to be candid with you, I am under a serious, solemn promise to Mrs. O'Grady, never to become security for any one, and really I cannot lend you any money, if you intend to ask me for it."

"Oh, you quite mistake me, my friend, I shall never ask you to lend me a farthing; only I fully expect, you may be sure, that you will shortly pay me what you owe me, as I shall get out of this abominable town immediately; but I trust you will give me credit for making the business as easy to you as I can, for old acquaintance sake."

"Easy to me, Sullivan, what on earth do you mean, man?"

"Nothing at all, my dear Sir, but that you can take your own time for paying me, except a few thousands, say three or four, which I shall thank you for immediately, as I shall be off to the Curragh on Thursday, to see my famous horse Mercury start, and I have many serious bets depending on him, poor fellow."

"Three or four thousands immediately! why

are you not Captain O'Sullivan?" said the Counselor, beginning to consider the name and manner of the man, and at the same time recalling some bad stories which he had some time before heard of him.

"Not at all mad, Sir: I think you can scarcely think me so, for asking such a wealthy fellow as you are for a speedy payment: and I think and trust that the lands and estate of Kneuchmanoon, may be productive and more fortunate in your skilful hands, than in those of my father and myself, as they have completely beggared our family since we unfortunately got possession of them."

The old Lawyer stopped, let go the arm of his late friend, looked at him stedfastly for some moments, and putting his arms a kimbo, (with him a favourite attitude,) exclaimed—"By G—, Sir, if you have dared to trick me, an old tried friend, such as I have at all times proved myself to be to you, and attempted to take me in, I shall make you rue it, and that bitterly too; I am too old to be caught by chaff, young man,

and your bravado will not answer, so I shall wish you a very good morning, Sir."

" Good morning, Counsellor, all good luck attend you ; remember me most affectionately to Mrs. O'Grady, who is quite the woman fitted to become a Lady Bountiful to the poor wretched families you will have under you at Kneuchnanon ; by the way, change the name, it is a bad one, and unlucky. If any thing has power, as I said before, to induce me to waive the unpleasant feelings which I experience at seeing my property in strange hands, believe me to be sincere when I say once more from my inmost heart and soul, it is the consolation of its becoming yours. Farewell, Counsellor, my friend Cameron, and my legal advisers Jervis and M'Clelland shall call upon you to-morrow to make the necessary arrangements, and regulations concerning the transfer of leases, title-deeds, &c. Good bye again ;" so saying, with the greatest seeming indifference, he walked off, leaving the old gentleman to " chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy."

To make a long story short, (as we say in Ireland,) Mr. O'Grady discovered that, with all his learning and experience, he had been completely humbugged, and had fallen into the toils of a noted swindler; in fact he had become the possessor of a property not worth one quarter of the sum which he was compelled to pay for it. A wretched and most miserable estate, situated amongst wild hills and bleak mountains, inhabited by a poor, starving and depraved tenantry, who, ruined by the sterility of the boggy, unwholesome soil, endeavoured to gain as much as they could by unlawful means and habits.

Having paid with heart-felt vexation of spirit for his useless purchase, Mr. O'Grady set off for Kneuchtnanoon to see it, and, though its appearance would have driven any other person out of his senses, he, with the utmost composure, and his usual happy temperament, determined and resolved to banish all unavailing regrets, and only look at the bright side of the business, and "make the best of a bad bargain."

He arrived with much difficulty at Kneuchtnanoon, and at once began to consider how he had best act, in order to improve it. He was totally unmindful of the cheerless and unpromising aspect of every thing around him, and without doubt of his ultimate success, commenced building, planting, and decorating. His own architect, his own engineer, he planned and put into execution the most extraordinary designs that ever entered into the head of man, and it never for one moment occurred to him that these plans and designs were not actually what they should have been.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Mr. O'Grady had arranged his plans and designs to his full and perfect satisfaction, and when he saw his house tolerably complete, he set off to Dublin, and brought his lady, with much pride and self-complacency, to her new home. The poor woman was petrified when she beheld the place on which her husband had been for two years lavishing immense sums of money; she could scarcely believe it possible that any one blest with a reasonable understanding, or even plain common sense, could act in the manner, and unaccountable way in which he had done.

The large and handsome chariot which had conveyed her down to Kneuchtnanooon could not be brought within many fields of the house,

and she was obliged to consent to be carried on the shoulders of a parcel of wild savages, over innumerable hedges and ditches, until she was deposited in the hall, more dead than alive.

As she looked around her, her wonder and amazement increased; and without doubt she had reason for both. An extraordinary house presented itself—without the least pretension at architecture or regularity: uncouth and unfinished, it stood a huge unshapely pile, in the centre of a spacious irreclaimable turf bog; surrounded on all sides by apparently inaccessible mountains, and ranges of rugged heathy hills, without a tree or shrub of any sort, kind, or description, to relieve its barrenness, or screen its nakedness. Pools of black water, caused by the excavations of the turf-makers, here and there interspersed the foreground; while the space at the back of the house was one expanse of rush-covered quagmire, decorated in some places with masses of greystone, the only produce (except the turf and rushes)

of that part of the demesne of Kneuchtna-noon.

But Mrs. Grady was, most fortunately for herself and all connected with her, blest with a most excellent and even temper: and when she saw her husband strutting about, and showing off his residence with unfeigned joy and delight, she could not find it in her heart to damp his pleasure and exultation; therefore, suppressing her natural feelings on the subject, annoying and vexatious as it was, she endeavoured to look satisfied, and appear contented; and if not so in reality, succeeded in making Mr. O'Grady think her so. Accustomed all her life to gay, cheerful society, a pleasant and commodious house, in a good situation,—a comfortable country villa, and every rational means of enjoying life, she had arrived at an age when any change would have been disagreeable, and would necessarily annoy her, and put her out of her way. Even her removals from town to country, and from country to town, were always arranged and conducted by her confidential

housekeeper, who was a complete fixture in the family, and who knew her mistress's quiet temperament too well to trouble her about any thing, and managed her, as well as every thing else, just as she pleased.

How great, therefore, must have been the surprise and vexation experienced by Mrs. O'Grady, when trust-worthy Keily was dispatched to town by her master next morning, for having in his presence dared to express some opinions derogatory to the credit and honour of Kneuchtnanoon and its vicinity.

Furnishing the house, with all its attendant pleasures and varieties, served for a little time to amuse Mrs. O'Grady, and prevent her ruminating over the change which had taken place in her life. But when that was over, she could not but think with sorrow and regret of the difference between crowded and amusing streets, which were wont in former times to amuse her, and the now dreary prospects which were ever before her, of wilds, bogs, morasses, and rocks.

The nearest town to Kneuchtnanoon was nine miles off, and the roads which led to it were execrable, but a bad look out for a person who had always considered a jaunt of three or four miles as quite sufficient exercise for one day; the nearest gentleman's seat was six miles away, and in a direction from them that was rendered inaccessible by the mountains, over which a carriage could not be impelled. Once indeed Mrs. O'Grady had ventured paying a visit in a low-backed common car, into which unsophisticated equipage she had ventured, at the imminent risk of breaking or dislocating every bone in her body; but she soon found the motion so dreadful, as to be obliged to alight and walk home again.

The poor lady was therefore obliged to remain at home, thinking of old times and old friends, until she had by degrees become reconciled to the change.

Finishing his dwelling in a style that ill-accorded with its situation, the old lawyer set about arranging and reclaiming his demesne;

and truly a most arduous undertaking he found it to be, and one in which any person but himself knew that he must fail. "Patience and perseverance" being his motto, he laboured without ceasing in his laborious and dispiriting undertaking, continually planning, and being as continually disappointed.

His dress, unaltered to suit his country residence and avocations, rendered him an object of amazement to his tenants, labourers, and the few stray sportsmen that might be led in the pursuit of game into his neighbourhood. A pair of unmentionables of corduroy, long dressing wrapper, white hat, marseilles waistcoat, yarn stockings, ruffled shirt, and wooden shoes, with the accompaniment of a superb diamond ring of the first water, completed this incongruous costume of the counsellor, who might be seen from sunrise to sunset superintending the labours of hordes of work-people, who were ever and always planting, draining, &c. Though every thing that was done at Kneuchtnanoon appeared to fail, still its master persisted; and

though his trees perished in the ungenial soil over and over, still over and over did he plant thousands, nay, millions, which were destined to meet the same fate as did their predecessors. The gardens, notwithstanding the care and vigilance of a most skilful and experienced gardener and nurseryman, were unfruitful, and even unproductive of the most common vegetables and roots; and, fond as was Mrs. O'Grady of flowers and shrubs, she found it next to an impossibility to cultivate any thing in the flower-beds; and during the spring and winter months she was obliged to give up walking out altogether, as she narrowly escaped being drowned one day while venturing to the green-house,—an immense concealed bog-hole, within twenty yards of the back door, having received the unfortunate lady into its most capacious mouth, where she was obliged to remain until her husband (happening by chance to ramble in that direction) discovered her up to her neck in mud and water, half dead with fright and cold, her bonnet barely discernible

above the reeds and rushes which choked up the place. It may reasonably be supposed that after this unpleasant adventure Mrs. O'Grady seldom ventured out alone or unattended; and, as her helpmate was often too much and too busily engaged to wait on her, she was obliged to content herself with work and in-door amusements for the greater part of the nine months in each year, which she spent at Kneuchtnanoon.

After a few years Mr. O'Grady seemed to have forgotten the manner in which he became possessed of his country seat; and never was there a property, the most cultivated or flourishing, more prized than was the wild, inhospitable district of which he was master. He appeared fascinated; and as he grew older, more charmed and delighted with it, and in the castle buildings of his imagination, foresaw it the wonder of the world.

As both Mr. and Mrs. O'Grady were, on their marriage, "well stricken in years," it caused but little wonder amongst their friends and relatives that they had not been blest with offspring.

During their residence in Dublin this domestic want had been but little felt by the gentleman, who, absorbed either in the discharge of his professional duties, or the chimerical pursuits of a talented but most peculiarly odd fancy, gave himself little time to brood over the circumstance ; and if he happened to think of it for a moment with regret, philosophically determined to banish all wishes and hopes on the subject from his mind, and content himself with what was undoubtedly ordered for the best. Not so with his lady. Her hopes had been sadly disappointed ; and when she saw advancing years marked in deep traces on her, and on her husband, she could not repress her feelings of sorrow, and vainly wished and prayed for the only blessing which was withheld. Now that Mr. O'Grady had purchased an estate, and established himself upon it, he had reverted with pain to the idea of the want of an heir and a successor. He was aware that, in all human probability, a son of his own would never be born ; and therefore he threw his eyes around

him to discover which of his own or his wife's relatives he had better make his representative, and inheritor of his wealth.

Amongst various sets of nephews, nieces, cousins, near and distant, and all sorts of connexions, he in vain endeavoured to find out one after his own mind, and one less selfish than the horde of eager aspirants who disgusted him by their evident greediness and rapaciousness. Unable to please his taste, he at length came to the resolution of letting matters rest, and take the chance of meeting, during the residue of his years, some friend more congenial to his mind than any of those who, connected to him by blood, only loved him for the sake of his worldly goods and comforts.

Mrs. O'Grady had had a brother whom she idolized in her early years, but who had fallen from the place which he had held in her esteem in consequence of irremediable misdemeanours. He had died some time before her removal to Kneuchtnanoon, after squandering a tolerable property. He had been a surgeon and phy-

sician of note in England, but in consequence of his extravagant habits (and scandal hinted at even grosser derelictions from honor and propriety), he had been tempted in an hour of remorse by the arch-fiend to raise his hand and end the life which he had disgraced, and which had been lent him for better purposes than those which he pursued. He had married for love, but that passion soon vanished from his unsteady mind; his wife had passed with him a life of martyrdom, and was left friendless and impoverished at his death, with an only son, and in extreme ill health. As her marriage had taken place contrary to the wishes of her husband's family, she struggled on in poverty for years without claiming their assistance, or craving their aid in any way; blest with a child who was fond and promising as her heart could wish, she had not a thought beyond him, or beyond his welfare.

By some chance Mr. O'Grady traced Mrs. Mansfield and her son, and communicated to his wife the intelligence of the existence of

both. At first she was unwilling to become acquainted with the widow, although her heart yearned to behold the child of that brother whom she had so loved and so deplored. After much deliberation on the subject, Mr. O'Grady advised her to write to her sister-in-law, and bury her unpleasing recollections in oblivion. Agreeing with advice which was so much in accordance with her own ideas, she wrote; and in due time received such a letter as paved the way towards a complete reconciliation. A regular correspondence, thus commenced, was ever afterwards constantly kept up, and, when old enough, the boy himself added his epistles to the intercourse, which at length became personal.

When first young Frederick Mansfield and his mother accepted the invitation of his uncle to visit Kneuchtnanoon, they almost dreaded that the favourable feeling which had been there excited in their behalf, would have been dissipated by some untoward chance when domesticated together. But, happily for all parties,

it was otherwise. Mrs. O'Grady, delighted by the striking resemblance of the boy to her brother, was easily won to his side; while her husband was not less satisfied by his naturally gentle and pleasing manner and disposition. The mother, studious to cultivate the good will of all, was not behindhand in creating it, and before the visit was over, she found that her child, as well as herself, had made a considerable progress in the affections of both Mr. and Mrs. O'Grady.

Frederick was, by the assistance of his uncle, placed at Harrow, where he remained until it was time for him to consider the choice of a profession; the law being the one selected as most fitting for the talents which he possessed, he was sent to Oxford, where he promised fair to do credit to the unremitting cares of his widowed parent, and those other friends interested for his welfare.

Kneuchtnanoon became, by degrees, much changed, improved cannot be said, for that was impossible; but it was a proof of the Counsellor's

motto of patience and perseverance ; for though the trees had been planted in some places five and six times over, still there was a consolation in finding, that sometimes they did at the sixth time show indications of growing ; and other signs equally encouraging increased his hopes that his trouble would be in time richly repaid. Even Mrs. O'Grady began to think she might yet be enabled to drive about, and in the summer season venture on a walk ; for the roads, by dint of industry and laborious exertions, became passable for cars, and sometimes carriages ; while the grounds, by innumerable drains, at last appeared thinking of being dry. Visitors by degrees found it within the range of possibility to call at Kneuchtnanoon, while the hospitality of its owners always insured pleasant society, with the pleasing addition of well-aired beds ; for though in the very centre of a bleak bog, the house was secured from the inroads of damp by the assiduity of its mistress, and the assistance of such fires as the celebrated turf of Kneuchtnanoon could produce ; and though

every one ridiculed the idea of living amongst morasses and bogs, still every one that was asked, accepted the invitations which they received; and the guests found that the exquisite Madeira and exhilarating Champagne was neither spoiled in flavour nor quality, because the mountain currents had forced a passage through the cellars in which they were deposited.

CHAPTER III.

THE orb of day was setting, encircled with its golden halo,—the evening shades were stealing imperceptibly upon the valleys,—and the balmy breezes of the coming twilight were wafted through an open casement into the chamber of the languid and enfeebled Mrs. Beauclerk, the widow of a gallant officer of distinction, who had perished at Corunna. Pillows and cushions supported the sinking form of the almost dying woman, who, with resignation depicted on her countenance, seemed placidly and without fear awaiting the approach of “the great teacher, Death.”

A female, young and fair, just springing into womanhood, was seated near the sufferer, wrapt

in contemplation; and was only roused from her meditative mood by the mild, sweet voice of the invalid.

“Alice, my child,” she said faintly and with fondness, “come nearer to me, and listen to your expiring friend with patience and with fortitude.”

A burst of tears, and bitter sobs, told the agony that youthful heart endured as the summons was obeyed. As the seat of the girl was drawn closer to that of her friend, her hand was taken, and clasped with warmest affection to that more than maternal heart that loved and cherished her.

“My Alice, it is vain,—nay, sinful for me to hope that life can be prolonged; too visible is the progress of disease for me to doubt the sure, and rapidly approaching notices of death. I should rejoice the awful summons does not find me unprepared, and I should gladly—oh! most gladly, hail the ending of my days on earth; I should rejoice to leave this vain and heartless vale of tears, but that one more than

mortal wish remains ungratified, and one cherished tie remains to hold me to the world. Your welfare, Alice, is that only wish ; you, best beloved, and only you, are that sole tie I cannot bear to separate from. To have seen you, my child, restored to those rights so cruelly torn from you, and to have beheld you moving in the sphere marked out for you by heaven, were prayers most fondly and most earnestly proffered by me. But a Power infinite and just forbids what, in my ignorance, I looked upon as right, and He in His own good time can bring to pass, and accomplish His own wise purposes.

“ Repine not, Alice, though I am taken from you ; grieve not for me ; earth’s choicest blessings, and the world’s best gifts are as but dross to those promised to the redeemed of Israel ; and I would not for the wealth of empires exchange my proud, though unworthy title, to the heavenly joys of the new and glorious Jerusalem. Dear child of my heart, though I shall be taken from you ; though cold, selfish, and unfeeling relatives, and interested friends, are

all that will remain to you when I am gone; though the world may seem to you harsh, callous, and unpitying, still remember, Alice, and bear in mind, that one eye regards you, one arm supports you, one heart will love you, whose approval is beyond price, whose blessing is above and beyond your wishes.

“ You were, dearest, confided to my care by one who (though erring, alas ! and awfully too) was dear to me as a sister. Alice, I loved her too well, and my recompense has been a just one. I murmur not at the return I have received; but I would warn you to beware of those who, for their own unlawful ends, would tamper with your soul, and strive to gain forbidden happiness on earth, and thereby lose their claim to heaven. Oh, self ! thou scourge of human and sinful mortals, may we be preserved from thy toils, and may we be proof against thy insidious allurements. I strove, Alice, to rear you from your first moments in the paths of peace and rectitude. Thanks be to Him through whom and by whom the work

prospered, I see what you are; pure and innocent as fallen mortals can be; and as yet I fondly hope and trust, unspoiled and uncontaminated by the world. May you continue so; may no foul deeds or thoughts corrupt you, the fair work of creation, and may your end, and the termination of your days prove you victorious over sin and the grave.

“ You will find when I am gone, my last will, and my instructions. Abide by them—my Alice, that look tells me that you will; and for my sake, obey with meekness and mildness, the commands of those whom you will find named by me to be your future protectors and advisers. A solemn oath forbids my disclosing to my darling her birth and parentage, but as far as you are concerned, no stain o’erclouds them. A vow prohibits your being made acquainted with the authors of your being. The same vow protects the honour and dignity of one framed to be lauded and upheld, and the same solemn promise screens the reputations of those dear to me. But I must beware of my oath; my love

to you had almost led me to reveal the truth; but the temptation has passed away, and I am preserved from the sin which for a moment threatened.

“ When life is fled, and that I am numbered with the dead—nay now, Alice, I had hoped such sufferings as are caused me by those tears, would have been spared. My child, my dear, dear child, for my sake be calm; for the sake of Him who from above will watch you, and care for you, if you trust in Him, cease your sorrow, and quell those sinful, selfish feelings; feelings which are rebellious against the will of Heaven. Surely, Alice, you love me too well to wish to hold me here, bound down with pain, infirmities, and age; you should rather pray for my release from misery.”

“ Forgive me, Aunt, forgive your Alice, oh forgive her! Can you expect me to suppress or to controul feelings of anguish like those which now oppress me; can you blame me, can you think me rebellious? Oh no, no, surely not! Nature must find vent, or else my burst-

ing heart would break. Selfish I may be, to sorrow at your rejoining spirits kindred to your own ; but can you blame your Alice for her affliction, when she remembers and considers that, added to the misery of losing you, her friend, her guide, her more than mother, and her protectress, she will be thrown upon the world an outcast and a beggar, without one heart to comfort or console her, without one fostering friend to protect or to relieve her.”

“ Alice, your own sweet manners, and amiable disposition, have made many of the truest friends for you ; my funds, though small, will ensure you all necessary comforts at my decease, and add something to whatever you may receive from your guardians. And, believe me, when I say, that though injustice may still keep you from your just rights, and from what you are by law entitled to, still decency, if not humanity, will force a suitable provision from your hardened persecutors. Perhaps I may yet be spared to intercede for you, and to defend you,

but, Alice, I fear and doubt it. — Ring for Mathews, my kind nurse and humble friend; Alice, you will love her and care for her for my sake. If you should be permitted to retain the services of an attendant, do not part with her; believe me, she is worthy to guard you. I am fatigued, love, and while free from pain, should like to prepare for rest. God bless and save my darling Alice.”

The conversation ended.—Mrs. Beauclerk retired for the night, and her niece harassed in mind and body from sorrow, and from exertions in attending her friend, threw herself upon her bed, and endeavoured in vain to procure sleep. At first she could not; imagination portrayed her to herself, lone, destitute, and mournful; left to pursue her way through life unpitied and unaided, without the warning voice of her instructress, or the sympathy of her warm heart.

She dropped at last into a slumber, overpowered by tears and weariness, and delusive

fancy had commenced to soothe her by her altered visions, when the light step of Mrs. Mathews roused her.—

“How is my Aunt, Mathews?”

“Very ill indeed, Ma’am; you had better rise.”

“Get my wrapper, Mathews; you alarm me dreadfully,” said the frightened girl, as she hastily arose, and hurried to the room of her aunt, whom to her dismay she beheld nearly lifeless. The unusual cessation of pain which had inspired her mind with hopes of a favourable change in her disease, had been unhappily the forerunner of dissolution, unexpected by all, but the lady herself. Paralysed with horror at the dreadful sight, Alice summoned the physicians, but to hear the corroboration of her fears, and she was informed that in a few seconds life would be extinct. The voice of Alice acting on the sufferer as a charm, for a second roused her, and she signed to her to give her air, and to support her. Day was dawning, and as the grey light streamed in on the dying Christian’s wan and

deathlike countenance, she smiled, and the fresh air of the summer's morning fanned the fast expiring spark of existence. "Alice," she murmured, "Alice, where are you?—My child, God bless you.—My Alice, where are ——? Al———. Hold me, Alice. My ——" the word was lost upon her lip, that one loved word, so idolized in death. Her head sunk upon the pillow—her eyes glazed, and rested on the child of her soul—they closed—the stamp of the king of terrors was on her brow—she was dead, and Alice Beauclerk was alone—and friendless.

CHAPTER IV.

ALICE BEAUCLERK when in some manner recovered from the shock which she had received by the death of her friend, turned her thoughts towards the contemplation of what was likely to be her future destiny. She strove to acquire fortitude and resignation to bear up against her heavy affliction, and her efforts were not ineffectual. Her first care was to write to the person nominated by Mrs. Beauclerk to discharge those duties from which that lady had been called ere they had been completed. This guardian was the Countess of Arlingham, a person totally unknown to Alice, but one for whom her Aunt must feel attached, from the responsible trust which she had committed to her. Her next and most particular care was to arrange the

affairs of Mrs. Beauclerk, according to her wishes and directions. After adjusting those, she found but a trifling yearly sum of money remained for her, far less than what her Aunt had reckoned on being able to leave her, as, though that lady had enjoyed a considerable jointure and pension, it had barely sufficed to keep up her establishment, and procure advantages for her ward.

Alice, with a swelling heart, dismissed the servants of her friend, those old acquaintances so long known, and so valued. She defrayed the expenses, dispensed the legacies, and wound up the affairs as if still guided by the admonitions that were wont to direct her; and at length, when all was done, and excitement ended, her really lonely and forsaken state broke upon her as if for the first time; and she felt how sad a thing it is to need a friend, and home.

One morning, while endeavouring to cheer away the gloom which hung upon her, a note was brought by Mathews, which, being hastily opened by Alice, was found to contain as follows:—

My dear Miss Beauclerk,

With feelings of sincere regret I offer to you my condolences upon the decease of my ever valued friend Mrs. Beauclerk. Believe me, I sympathize most cordially in the distress of mind to which I am convinced you must have become a victim ; and entreat of you to give to me and Mrs. O'Grady the pleasure of your company for as long a time as may be convenient to you. We have nothing to offer you but an affectionate welcome, and our stupid selves, which, however, may accord better with your feelings at present than any other society. Mrs. O'Grady unites with me in kindest regards to you.

And believe me to be,

My dear Miss Beauclerk,

Yours most faithfully and respectfully,

GEORGE O'GRADY.

Kneuchtnanooti House, July 18th, 17—.

P.S. We have accommodations for your servant.

Tears of gratitude forced their way down the cheeks of Alice as she perused the kind note of her worthy friend, and she determined at once to accept the proffered hospitality. Some time must necessarily intervene ere she could expect an answer from Lady Arlingham, who was at Nice ; and therefore she was preparing to write a letter of thanks to Mr. O'Grady, when Matthews told her he was himself the bearer of the note, and at that very moment in the house waiting a reply.

Alice flew to the friend of her beloved Aunt with unchecked pleasure, and smiled through her tears as she met his warm embrace. She knew not how to thank the good old man for his kindness, and was silenced in doing so by his urgent entreaties to set out the following morning, to which she gladly acceded.

Mr. O'Grady's carriage was in readiness at the appointed hour, and notwithstanding the length of the journey, the heat of the weather, and the badness of the roads, they arrived the

next evening at the dwelling of her friends, who welcomed her with sincere joy, and sympathizing kindness.

By degrees the spirits of Alice began to revive, and she dreaded the arrival of the mandate for her to quit her residence at Kneuchtnanoon, which was each day becoming more amusing and agreeable. Mr. O'Grady would talk for hours to her of the being whom she had loved and lost, and by so doing comfort and console her. While his no less amiable partner would press the hand of the mourner with affection, and mingle her meed of praise in the discourses of her husband.

One morning at breakfast Mr. O'Grady said to his wife, "I am quite happy to find, Martha, that dear Frederick proposes joining us so soon; I had begun to fear that his new avocations would preclude his coming here for some time at least."

Alice, who had met young Mansfield at Kneuchtnanoon during the life-time of her aunt, exclaimed, "I did not know that your

nephew, Mr. O'Grady, had embarked or engaged in any profession since his quitting Oxford."—

“ Yes, Miss Beauclerk, he has ; one that promises fair, I think, to do him credit. I cannot bear poor idle gentlemen, of whom Ireland can boast a tolerable share. Pride, the bane of this unfortunate country, prevents persons from bringing up their families to any business or employment ; and permits them to leave their children starving, and unable to assist themselves, with only the consolation of their being gentlemen, and gentlewomen.”

Alice said, “ Has Mr. Mansfield been called to the bar yet ? ”

“ No, Miss Alice, not as yet ; he has accepted the office of tutor and travelling companion to the young Earl of Portland, eldest son of the Marquis of Cornwall.”

“ Tutor ! ” exclaimed Alice, smiling, “ surely he is himself too young, I should imagine, to hold so responsible a situation.”

The old gentleman answered, “ Young he is

indeed, but steady, I trust, beyond his years. The Earl proposes to travel for some time, and, as his education is complete, and his morals perfectly correct, his father has entrusted him with the choice of his own companion from amongst the numbers who were candidates for that honour; the young men were friends and colleagues at the University, and the father of the Earl knew Mansfield's character too well to oppose the election made in his favour."

After a pause of some moments, Mr. O'Grady added, "I should not wish Frederick to know my views with respect to him; as my heir, and the inheritor of this estate, I think he does not need any other help; but seeing a little of the world, and forming such a friendship as he has done, will, I think, rather be an advantage to him than otherwise. He has asked my permission to introduce his young élève to me and his aunt, and I expect they both will arrive to-morrow, or next day at farthest."

The trio shortly after broke up, and Alice retired to reply to a letter which she had on the

preceding evening received from her new protectress, Lady Arlingham.

The hand-writing at once struck Alice as being the same in which Mrs. Beauclerk had had letters directed to her in, but from whom, or with what contents, she was unaware, as they had all been regularly destroyed as soon as read. The present one addressed to Alice, ran thus:—

Dear Miss Beauclerk,

I have received your letter, and have to apologize for my seeming inattention in not answering it before ; I trust you will pardon me, as I have been ill, and until this day unable to sit up for any length of time.

I regret exceedingly the death of my old and valued friend Mrs. Beauclerk, to whom I have been since my infancy sincerely attached ; for which reason (I suppose) she has nominated me as your guardian. I was indeed truly grieved to hear from you that her sufferings were so dreadful, and am truly happy to find she had

the comfort of your kind attendance during her last hours. With respect to your future prospects in life, I must not venture to decide until I communicate with one much interested for you; you must therefore remain for the present with some friends whom you can remunerate for the trouble and expense which you may cause them. I shall write as soon as I possibly can to you, and I remit for your use fifty pounds, supposing you may be in want of money. Pray excuse the shortness of this letter, which you must ascribe to my still unsettled health, and believe me to be,

Dear Miss Beauclerk,

Yours, &c. &c. &c.

ADELAIDE ARLINGHAM.

The coldness of this brief and studied epistle went to the heart of Alice Beauclerk, used as she had been to affection and attention; she wept in bitterness of spirit over it, and she thought with renewed affliction of her who now in her cold grave, had loved her as life itself, and who,

watchful and tender, had bestowed upon her more than even a mother's love.

She endeavoured to calm herself sufficiently to reply to Lady Arlingham, and was tempted to enclose to her the paltry gift which she had sent her; but on remembering the admonitions of her departed friend, she suppressed the latter feeling, and contented herself with barely thanking her for her promise of soon writing, and also for the loan which she had entrusted to her, at the same time assuring her ladyship she would return it with gratitude at a future, and she trusted not very distant time. She concluded with entreating Lady Arlingham not to put herself to any trouble about her, and not to inconvenience herself in any way, as she had been fortunate enough to find those who were friends indeed, that had volunteered their protection to her, and had received her into their dwelling as a daughter, where they strove by every means that friendship could devise, to make her happy, and forget her unprotected state.

As she sealed her letter she could not but

pray that she might be permitted to remain with those whom Providence had sent to her relief when she required it, instead of being forced to accept the countenance and assistance of persons who seemed to consider her as an incumbrance.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Alice had sent her letter to the post, she tied on her bonnet, and thinking that the air would serve her, determined to take a walk. As she had never been tempted to ramble through the morasses and bogs of Kneuchtnanooon, she was deliberating which way to go, when she was joined by Mr. O'Grady, who, putting her hand under his arm, promised to be her guide and escort through the grounds.

“ You are a bad walker, Miss Beauclerk, I think.”

“ Oh no, I delight in long walks and rambles.”

“ Do you? that is strange indeed, and you have never seen my improvements which would have delighted you so much, and which, without

egotism, I flatter myself would amuse you: I have done wonders here."

"I believe, Mr. O'Grady, your improvements have cost you an immensity; therefore they should be worth seeing."

"They have cost me certainly a great deal, but what matters it, when I am so well repaid?—every thing is now in a fair way of doing well, provided the trees do not fail again, and that the drains which I have made carry off the water."

"And I hope there is not any danger of those failures of which you speak."

"I think not, though my wise people say so; however, if there is, I have only to do all over again."

"That certainly will mend the matter; but I should imagine it would discourage you."

"Not a bit; the place, as you may see, possesses great natural beauties and advantages. I will candidly allow I was sorry at first to be obliged to purchase it, but I think I ought

to congratulate myself upon the great acquisition which it now is to my property."

Alice was all this time trying to find out something or other to praise or comment upon, and at last said, "There appears to be admirable turf here."

"Capital! There I shine,—the best turf in Ireland, and more of it than any one I know can boast of; I have more than I know what to do with, though my tenants about here, and all their friends, have my permission to take what they want."

"So I should think, Mr. O'Grady,—those bogs before the house are very productive."

"Why, yes; I did not exactly want to have turf in my lawn, if I could avoid it; but I never could do any thing with the ground, or reclaim it, so I tried the old never-failing system here, of turf, and I succeeded beyond my expectations."

"That high hill opposite the drawing-room windows seems to me to be an admirable barometer."

“Excellent! I have only to look out, and I know at once the state of the weather. You see nothing grows on that plain, so I keep it bare for the prospect of the hill.”

“You are right; but what is the reason you have not any plants in the conservatory?”

“I will tell you; I faced it the wrong way, to the north; so the sun has not any power on it, and even if it had I doubt whether things would do in it, as the wind has immense power over it, and I never, by any chance, can keep an entire pane there.”

“What a pity! I think Mrs. O’Grady is not fond of the country.”

“She is not; and for that very reason I am hastening my improvements, for, as she of course is my first object, I shall in some years let the house ready furnished, and with the demesne, to some person of property wanting a handsome country residence, and return to Dublin; for to be candid with you, my wife will never be happy out of it.”

Alice felt delighted as she heard this un-

dreamt-of determination from Mr. O'Grady; for she knew how dissatisfied his lady was at Kneuchtnanooon, and she likewise perceived that at last Mr. O'Grady was becoming tired of the never-ending mortifications which he met with, and the countless wealth which had been thrown away. However, she had not time to make any observations on the subject, for a sudden turning brought a carriage into view, which was rapidly approaching them.

On meeting the old gentleman and his companion, the vehicle was stopped, and in a moment Mr. O'Grady was welcoming with manifest pleasure his nephew,—who, on being joined by his companion, introduced him to the old man as his friend Lord Portland, who with a frank and courteous manner received the salutations with which he was greeted.

Alice had turned aside when she perceived a stranger, and when he and Mr. O'Grady walked on she took the arm of Frederick Mansfield, and sauntered after them, without leaving any opportunity for him to introduce his friend.

When returned to her own room, she was in the act of laying her bonnet in her wardrobe, when a small box, covered with morocco leather, met her glance; she took it out, and placed it on a table, determining to inspect its contents, of which she was ignorant.

While Mrs. Beauclerk lived, she had never permitted any person to open a large old press, which was in her dressing-room. On her death, Alice had forced it open (the key not being visible), and found various parcels of letters tied up, with directions written on them, commanding Alice to burn them without reading. Some trinkets, which appeared valuable, a collection of old coins, and a small red box, were (beside the papers) all that were found; and Alice, having destroyed the various letters and parcels, according to her instructions, put the rest of the things into a trunk, which had only arrived at Kneuchtnanoon a few days before the present morning.

Having time at her disposal, as the O'Gradys would be engaged with their nephew and guest, she took the opportunity; and, after many

ineffectual attempts, found at last a key which opened the box. A quantity of cotton at first concealed three miniatures—two of females, and one of the other sex. They represented persons young and handsome, and the likeness of one of the ladies, and likewise that of the gentleman, had each a coronet worked in hair upon the back, with the initials M. C. and W. C. similarly traced. The other one had on it simply the letters A. H. wrought in seed pearls, and was smaller than the others, which matched.

As the faces were strange to Alice, she imagined they had been resemblances of friends of Mrs. Beauclerk, and was about to re-pack them, and close the case to which they belonged, when a small slip of paper fell upon the floor; she took it up—opened it—and found these words in the hand-writing of her departed friend :—

“ Alice, born May 7th, 1799; baptized, by my wish, Alice Beauclerk; and, likewise, by the desire of her mother, given to my care May 7th, 1799. Certificate of her baptism to

be found at the Protestant church of —, in
V—. Witnesses, Sarah Mathews and myself,

“ALICE BEAUCLERK.”

“May 18th, 1799.”

Here, then, was an increase to the mystery which surrounded her,—her real name not even mentioned, but only that which was given her by the wish of her benefactress. Her mother, too—her own, own mother, had cast her from her a few hours after her birth; and if appearances might be relied upon, had never cared for, or remembered her. Poor Alice, though forsaken and forgotten by her who had given her being, she had been cared for and protected far, far better than if she had been nurtured under a maternal eye which only looked upon sin as a means to effect its purposes, and judged all in the creation to be as prone to guilt as she herself was.

Alice had scarcely put up the certificate with the miniatures, and locked up the box in her desk, when Mrs. O'Grady knocked at her door

to summon her to dinner. The old lady was shocked to see the swollen eyes of her dear young friend, and she vainly strove to soothe the grief which she believed to be but the awakened remembrance of her aunt. She saw, however, too plainly, the violence of her emotion, and at once accepted her apologies for not appearing until the evening, and left her to herself and contemplation.

As soon, however, as Mrs. O'Grady quitted the dining-room, Alice joined her, and forgot her own troubles in endeavouring to amuse her, and appear cheerful herself before her affectionate friend. Mrs. O'Grady was exceedingly fond of a game of cards, and Alice was soon engaged with her at picquet. They counted, re-counted, piqued, and re-piqued, until Mrs. O'Grady rose to order tea. They had been so intently engaged by the game, that they had not perceived the entrance of Lord Portland, who, without claiming their attention, had seated himself behind Alice's chair.

Her fair and clustering ringlets hung unre-

strained in rich profusion around her soft and lovely countenance; her sweet and dove-like eyes, pensive and mournful, were shaded by "lids whose jetty fringe" contrasted strongly with her snowy forehead and alabaster cheek; and her slight and yielding form was not seen to less advantage, because of the sable garb with which it was enwrapped. As she sat, her face and figure were accurately portrayed in a large and massive mirror, which was opposite to her, and the Earl thought the hour but a moment, in which he had been contemplating the fascinating girl.

Mrs. O'Grady, being near-sighted, and at times uncommonly absent, continued unmindful of the stranger's presence until Alice rose, and turned to ring the bell; when starting, her exclamation of surprise drew the attention of Mrs. O'Grady towards the intruder, who apologized for the unintentional alarm which he had caused the younger lady.

An introduction of course took place, but divested of all form by the occurrence which

preceded it; and the Earl found that he had met in the wilds of Erin a being more captivating than he could imagine, and one more likely to enchain his heart than any other of the sex with whom he had been acquainted, even in the bright galaxy of fashion which he had so lately quitted.

CHAPTER VI.

Lady Arlingham to the Marchioness of Cornwall.

ALICE BEAUCLERK is no more—another witness of our secret gone. Oh, Maude, how heavily does iniquity press upon the heart in which it dwells! How does it turn to stone the once soft and warm feelings of its victims! Would you believe it, I was happy when I read that first of women had gone where, Maude, I doubt shall either you or I find access? How I should have loathed myself in past and better days, if I had dreamed of finding joy within my breast at hearing of the decease of my earliest and truest friend, my defender, and my protectress; but so it was,—no regret, no sorrow, no lament, nothing but rejoicing, and selfish, sordid ingratitude.

The information came from Alice the younger; she seems to me to be the very counterpart of our once-loved Alice. I wish you could or would read her letter—so mild, so touching, so beautiful were her sentiments, that my blood ran cold as I perused them. I looked back upon the days of my innocence; and tears—long, long denied, coursed down my cheek, and quieted for a moment the still sharp arrows of remorse.

Alice Beauclerk was truly a rare and an uncommon being; she preserved even to death our secret. Believe me, her ward is utterly in ignorance, and we never yet have been betrayed. I always foretold we might intrust her whom we did, and my prophecy has been verified. But enough of this, my friend. I wrote a cold and formal letter, and I sent to the forlorn girl a paltry sum, least a large one might rouse suspicions. She knows not where to go to; to you must I look for instructions and advice, without which I know not how best to act.

Portland has gone, I hear, to Ireland. May heaven preserve him, and guard him from the sins of his parents ! I joy to hear the character of the companion whom your Lord has selected for him. Write to me immediately on receipt of this, and say what I must do. I have been ill in body as well as mind ; therefore can only add, I am, as ever, yours,

ADELAIDE ARLINGHAM.

The Marchioness of Cornwall to Lady Arlingham.

I have received the letter of my Adelaide with pleasure and unfeigned thankfulness. Oh, friend of my bosom, my soul felt lightened of its heaviest load, when the words ‘ Alice Beauclerk is no more,’ met my view. I pressed the precious paper to my heart. I felt overwhelmed with rapture ; and years of fearful, incalculable doubt seemed instantly to clear away. But is *the* secret safe ? Is there no hidden trace of our eventful enterprise left lurking, ready to start up and ruin us ? Is Alice as innocent as she appears to be ? I fear it, I

suspect her. If the elder Alice has died as she has lived—true to us, then is she the only proof of virtue that I ever knew; no other being ever can resemble her. Alice—the present Alice—could not; her mother's child could never, in the most remote degree, be like to her preceptress; if she were, it would be indeed miraculous.

But the girl must be disposed of. Your late husband had an Irish agent, a most useful being at all events to you; he is just fitted for our purpose. Make him take her; pay him well, but not too well; make up some varnished lie—your invention was always sharp and ready; keep Alice with your agent's family, and make them marry her to some one to whom a pretty face and a few thousands may be an object; she will be glad to take any one.

If I did not know you, and well, too, Adelaide, I should say you were turning Methodist. Methinks you promise to enact such a character well, and to perfection. Be sure you do not forget to preach morality, inculcate it strongly, and theory may serve

as well as practice : you should try, at all events. But, mark me well, we play a deep, deep game ; as yet it hath been successful on our side, but one wrong cast, and we are lost ; honour, fortune, rank, friends, and reputation, all, all at stake ! Adelaide, beware !

MAUDE CORNWALL.

Lady Arlingham to Darby Dudley, Esq.

Dear Sir,

Your last remittance came to me in time, for which I thank you, as well as for the other benefits for which I am your debtor. I trust to hear Mrs. Dudley continues well, and also your lovely and promising young ladies. I really quite long to see them, and request you will give me a most particular and satisfactory account of them all.

And now, my dear Sir, I have to request your aid and assistance in a little matter, which is of much importance to a most intimate and very particular friend of mine. A young girl, the daughter of a relative of Lord Arlingham's,

having been left destitute, and in most unfortunate circumstances, I have been commissioned to look out for a gentleman's family, of elegance and refinement similar to yours, to whom the young lady, Miss Beauclerk, may be consigned, until her friends, or the guardian with whom she may be placed, finds some one of respectability who will take her to wife, with a tolerable fortune, which will be paid on her wedding-day. Now, my dear Mr. Dudley, if you would oblige me, and allow the girl to reside with you, you would have one hundred pounds per annum, besides a suitable allowance for clothes, &c. &c. If out of your power to oblige me by thus doing, pray say so at once, as I would not for the world inconvenience or annoy so kind a friend as you at all times have proved yourself to be to me; and let me have a recommendation from you or from Mrs. Dudley to some family who would take Miss Beauclerk, and the allowance which I offer; and let me have an answer as soon as may be convenient to you.

Pray say every thing sincere and affectionate for me to your lady and daughters; and excuse all this trouble, which is caused by your sincere friend and well-wisher,

ADELAIDE ARLINGHAM.

Darby Dudley, Esq. to Lady Arlingham.

My Lady,

Your valued favour of the twentieth instant has just come to hand, and I feel happy and proud at being deemed worthy of the trust which your Ladyship has confided to me.

Mrs. Dudley presents her humble compliments, and knows not how to thank you for the high honour conferred on her and on her daughters by your Ladyship's valuable remembrances. Our children, who were only blossoming when we had the honour of your Ladyship's company at Dudley Grove, have now bloomed into perfection, and are become, without vanity, rare specimens in the garden of nature. I wish your Ladyship could see them; they would derive treasures of grace, elegance, and refinement,

from beholding you even for a moment: though, permit me to say, they are not by any means deficient in exterior, as well as interior polish, &c. Your Ladyship's *protégé* shall be received into the bosom of my family; and I flatter myself that the examples which she will there daily witness will tend to improve her manners and conduct, should she require it, and expand and bring to perfection whatever talents or genius she may possess. I shall be in readiness to set off and bring Miss Beauclerk here, whenever I shall be happy enough to receive further orders from your Ladyship, whom I trust this unworthy epistle may find extravagantly well, and I subscribe myself, humbly and reverently,

Your Ladyship's

Obedient, obliged, devoted servant,

DARBY DUDLEY.

Dudley Grove, &c.

CHAPTER VII.

FREDERICK MANSFIELD, who had been long acquainted with Alice, and who felt for her as a brother, had been pained at seeing her so much altered, and looking so very delicate, as she did on his arrival at Kneuchtnanoon. He insisted on her each day taking exercise, and strove to induce her to accede to his wishes, by planning excursions and amusements for her incessantly. He and his friend (or we should rather say pupil) made it a point to accompany her, and they soon had the gratification of seeing the success of their endeavours, by her heightened colour and increasing strength.

Days and weeks had flown ; the continental tour had been postponed ; the Earl each day

discovered new beauties at Kneuchtnanoon, and appeared quite and determinedly blind to the positive and decided fact of his having fallen desperately in love. Whether his Lordship was as blind as he seemed to be, or not, is doubtful; but of this, reader, rest assured, his friend and Mentor was; for if the slightest idea of the truth had arisen in his mind, his honour and the responsibility of the trust which he held, would have compelled him, notwithstanding his affection for Alice, to insist on Lord Portland's separation from the young and lovely object of his passion.

However, as the truth of the business, or the state of his Lordship's heart, was never guessed at, Alice and her lover became each hour more attached; and before one month had passed he had opened his mind to her, and sworn never to forsake her. But Alice, though in love, deeply and devotedly, scarcely permitted the vows to pass his lips ere she recollected herself. She started, she trembled, and she would have fallen to the earth, but for the prompt and ready

assistance of the Earl, who, folding her to his heart, implored and entreated her to reveal to him the cause of her indisposition. His words and tender manner brought her to herself, and, withdrawing from his embrace, she said—

“I blush, my Lord, that my folly has permitted such a scene as this, but I had forgotten myself, and what I am, unfortunately. But you will pardon me, and forget my presumption, for, believe me, it was unintentional.”

“What is your meaning, Alice? What can your meaning be? What presumption do you allude to, for I am ignorant of it?”

“You do not know, Lord Portland, whom you speak to. Alice Beauclerk is poor, portionless, and she might almost add, friendless; as such even you might address her, because your doing so would but evince your noble and disinterested spirit, your benevolent and generous disposition. But, my Lord, you know not all. Poor, portionless, and friendless, are misfortunes which might be, perchance, overlooked by you and yours; but disowned, unknown, and stig-

matized as an adventuress, and a child of infamy, do you think I would presume to come before your noble and illustrious family to claim the title of your wife? No, my Lord, though I have been erring and unthinking, I am not so base and utterly unworthy as to entrap you, and ruin you. The blame alone rests with me, as such I shall but feel its weight. My Lord, as the only favour you can grant me, permit this subject to pass from your remembrance.”

“ Alice, you dream ; I cannot even guess at what you allude to. I love you—I have told you so—and still you seem to doubt my truth. Alice, if you were what you say you are,—if you were worse, ten thousand times worse, I should not—could not—would not cease to love you.”

“ If so, you cannot be, my Lord, the being I imagined. If so, my Lord, I sorrow at it from my heart ; for, mark me, and believe me, your wife I will not be ! Though unknown and cast upon the world, I have pride, Lord Portland ; pride which will, I trust, enable me to avoid the

perils which surround me, and to prevent me from intruding unwished for into the family of any one, even into yours. When you think upon my words, you will see the truth, and give me credit for the manner in which I act."

As Alice ceased speaking, the entrance of Frederick Mansfield put an end to the conversation. Lord Portland was obliged to accompany him to Mr. O'Grady, who wanted him; and Alice was left to ruminate on the interview which had taken place.

A day or two afterwards Alice received the following letter from Lady Arlingham:—

Dear Miss Beauclerk,

I was happy to find from your last letter (acknowledging the receipt of the note which I inclosed to you) that you had been fortunate enough to meet with an asylum in the house of a friend. However, as I have made arrangements with my agent, Mr. Dudley, a most excellent man, you need not longer be a burthen on the hospitality of the family with whom you are. As soon as may be convenient

to my friend Mr. Dudley, of Dudley Grove (a most excellent and worthy man,) he will let you know when his family can receive you at their house, and attend you in person thither, where you will be domesticated with his amiable family. A suitable sum shall be paid to Mr. Dudley for your maintenance, and he will have additional funds in his hands wherewith to provide you with clothes, &c. You are to be in all things directed by him, and by his lady, to whom you are to make yourself agreeable and obliging. I trust your friends will continue to hear favourably of you, and

I remain,

With every possible wish for your happiness,

Yours,

ADELAIDE ARLINGHAM.

When Alice showed this letter to Mrs. O'Grady, the old lady advised her at once to write to Lady Arlingham, and decline leaving her (Mrs. O'Grady's) house, or accepting the protection of Mr. Dudley: she poured forth numerous invectives against the heartless and unfeeling woman who

could thus command and order a young being still suffering acutely from the loss which she had sustained in the death of her friend and protectress, and implored Alice to remain at Kneuchtanoon, uncontrolled mistress of her own actions, until fate should make her independent of Lady Arlingham.

But Alice, who never acted without considering and deliberating, repeated to Mrs. O'Grady the words of Mrs. Beauclerk's will, which charged her to abide by the wishes and directions of the person whom she had named to be her guardian; and declared her resolution to act in accordance with those last directions and injunctions.

"Well," said Mrs. O'Grady, "Alice, you are right, and I was wrong; but I do not like Lady Arlingham's letters, they are studiously cold and callous; and believe an old, experienced person, she is a deep, artful woman; nevertheless, obey your aunt's wishes, and write constantly to me. Remember, while Mr.

O'Grady or I live, you shall never want a friend or home."

Alice could only press the hand of the kind woman, and sob her thankfulness for the affection and protection which she had received at Kneuchtanoon; and as she called Mathews to commence preparations for her removal, she bitterly lamented that her aunt had not bequeathed her to the care of those real friends, instead of the persons whom she had selected.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ ANOTHER cup of coffee, Mrs. Dudley, dear, if you please. I can at all times breakfast on a cup of coffee, a bit of toast, and an egg or two.”

“ You will want to lay a good foundation in your stomach, Mr. Dudley, against your journey ; try a morsel of hung beef and another egg. Really, this girl is a bore ; such a jaunt for nothing. I hope you will charge the expense of going for her.”

“ I intend it, darling. The salt, if you please. I had business within a few miles of where she is, but that is nothing ; I shall charge the entire journey.”

“ Of course, Mr. Dudley, dear ; you have a day-shirt, a night-shirt, a nightcap, a pocket-

handkerchief, and a pair of stockings in one pocket; your razor, your brush, your shoes, and your tooth-brush, in the other. Don't lose them, my love, for they are your company ones."

"No, dearest, I will take every possible care of them; and you shall see me—now, let me think—this is Monday, tomorrow will be Tuesday, the next day Wednesday,—I hope to be at home on Thursday to dinner, though if I am late I could eat any thing; you know I could make a tolerable dinner on a beefsteak and oyster sauce, or a roasted chicken stuffed with parsley, or a sheep's heart with a pudding in it; you know how careless I am about what I eat."

"You are indeed, my honey; mind, take a glass of strong punch to-night for fear of cold, changing your bed, and take a powder in the morning for fear of the bile in your stomach; do you hear me, Mr. Dudley?"

"I do, Mrs. Dudley. I wish I was off. Hope, ring the bell for the gig, that I may be in time for the coach. Mrs. Dudley, love, pray mind Charity's cough, and make her prac-

tise more than she does upon the instrument; if she had the patience and perseverance of Faith, she would in time surpass Paganini himself. Bless you all, my darlings; take care of yourselves until I come back to you. Mind the house, good bye, good bye." And off set Mr. Darby Dudley, of Dudley Grove, to escort his ward to his dwelling; his short, thick figure being increased in breadth by the additional clothes which he had mounted for the occasion, in defiance of the scorching heat of the weather; and in depth by the company conveniences which his careful wife had stowed into his capacious pockets; and his whole appearance bearing a striking resemblance to the little squat jugs known by the name of Toby Fill-pots.

Mr. Dudley had three daughters, of whom he was most prodigiously fond,—all fine, strong, bony women, above thirty; and their father, who professed to like every thing out of the common, had named them Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Mrs. Dudley—a bustling, thrifty woman—

allowed her young ladies (or, as she herself called them, her sensitive plants) to do exactly as they pleased, and attain the mastery over her and her husband, while she contented herself with the toils of housekeeping, cooking, &c.

“And so, girls,” said she to the fair trio, after Mr. Dudley’s departure, “I suppose we are to be bothered with this damsel from the Lord-knows-where, for the Lord-knows-how-long, or how short. I was easy enough about her coming until Lady Arlingham’s last letter came, for I fancied she was somebody that would make the big wigs take notice of us; and I thought maybe you would be asked up, darlings, to London with her, when she would be going to see her friends; but to my horror I find, my Lady only wants to fob her foundling off on us, and have done with her for good and all. However, a hundred a-year is something, besides nice pickings. I’ll engage I’ll manage Miss Butler, if that is her name, to some purpose. Hope, love, read the Countess’s letter; there it is, on the chimney-piece, and let us learn from it what we have to

do.”—Miss Hope, bursting with malice against the person who was coming, and who might, she thought, outshine her in beauty and accomplishments, took the perfumed epistle of Lady Arlingham’s in her fat, chubby hands, and read—

“ Dear Madam,

“ Mr. Dudley, my respected and highly-valued friend, having kindly promised protection to a young ward of mine, and having signified his will and inclination to receive the person immediately, I take the liberty of addressing you on the subject, to entreat your patronage for the destitute girl, whose name is Miss Beauclerk. She is at present on a visit with a friend of hers, Mr. O’Grady, of Kneuch-anoon, in the county of ——. You will find her, I trust, amenable to your directions and wishes ; and I request of you to use whatever means may be necessary to induce implicit obedience to your wishes or commands. If at any time a suitable match should offer for her, I

shall give her two thousand pounds, an excellent fortune, I need not say, for such a person. I shall regularly remit to you one hundred a-year for her support, and likewise fifty pounds (also yearly) for clothing, and any other necessities which the young lady may require. I trust, my dear Mrs. Dudley, you will pardon all this trouble, and permit me to present to your young ladies a set of ornaments each, with my kindest regards.

Believe me to be, dear Madam,

Most faithfully yours,

ADELAIDE ARLINGHAM."

" 'Pon my word, Mamma, if we have trouble with the girl, you must allow we shall have some remuneration for it. Thirty pounds a-year will give Faith and Hope ten pounds a-year to add to their wardrobe, with the same for myself, while twenty pounds will keep the young woman quite well enough for such a low person as she is," said Charity.

" Yes, Charity, you are right. I did intend

to put her into the best bed-room, but now I think the old nursery will do well enough for her ; besides, it is quite out of the way of visitors," replied Mrs. Dudley, as she hastened away to inspect a boiling of raspberry jelly, her house being famous for every thing in the eatable way, as Mr. Dudley had more receipts for cooking than any other man alive, as well as his being allowed by every one who knew him to be the best judge in the world of when things were well cooked, or when not.

CHAPTER IX.

“WHO is for a walk this morning?” said Mr. O’Grady to his visitants, as he buttoned up his large dreadnought to keep out the mist which floated past the windows of the breakfast-room; “I think it would do you all a great deal of good,” continued he, as he found his invitation unaccepted.

“Why, uncle,” said Frederick, “Miss Beauclerk has got a very severe cold, and I think she had better not increase it; if you please, we shall remain with her.”

“Well, well, boy, I see you will never like the country; this is a soft, lovely, growing day, and I shall enjoy it by myself.”

“ Oh, my dear uncle, you quite mistake; my tastes incline me to the picturesque, so I shall accompany you.”

“ Very well; make haste; I have not time to wait a moment.” So saying, the uncle and nephew left the room, to prepare for what might with truth be termed an aquatic excursion. Alice was industriously arranging the embroidery frame of Mrs. O’Grady, who had left the room a short time before the departure of her husband and nephew, “ on hospitable thoughts intent.”

The young Earl had watched with painful anxiety the disappearance of the party, as Alice had studiously contrived never to remain with him alone, since the disclosure of his love. Now, however, she had seen the door close after her friend, without having made any exertion to follow them, and seemed as if she rather wished for the present opportunity of speaking to him than otherwise.

Lord Portland sat as if engaged in reading a Magazine which he held; from time to time he raised his eyes to watch the countenance of his

companion, who scarcely seemed to be aware of his presence; and as the rapid flushings of excitement passed across his brow, he interposed the pages of his book to hide them from her view, if she had chanced to look upon him. But as she remained silent, and the precious moments of their privacy were wasting one by one away, he summoned resolution, and flinging away with vehemence the book which he had been gazing upon with indifference, he approached her, and taking her hand from the frame on which it had been resting, said—"Alice."

Alice raised her eyes for a moment, but instantly again they fell, as his piercing, scrutinizing glance met hers, and she tried to withdraw her hand from his, but the attempt was unavailing.

"Alice, I must speak to you; you shall not prevent me now, you cannot escape me. Cold, ungenerous, and unfeeling as is your conduct towards me, you cannot check the love which burns within my heart. You may call my passion, as you please, boyish and headstrong, but you cannot stem its progress; you may

despise it, but you cannot extinguish it. No, Alice, your unkindness is useless; you said, ‘that when I would think upon your words, I would see the truth which you had spoken, and give you credit for your actions.’ No, Alice, you are wrong; I pondered, I dwelt upon your words; though I could not believe, I thought upon them; but why? Because they were yours, because your lips had uttered them; but I still am unbelieving. No earthly power, not even your dissuasions, are availing, Alice; though you should hate me, I would love you.”

“ My Lord, I rather courted than avoided this meeting, because it may, it must be the last. In hourly expectance of a command which summonses me from this, I would indeed be pained were I to separate from any of my friends in anger, and most particularly from one who has honoured me so much as you have done. I will not remind you of the interview which passed between us in this very room but a day or two ago, because you tell me you have thought upon it; but this much I will say, that

I truly grieve you will not believe me, and give me credit for my unchangeable resolution."

"You may go where you will, Alice, but I will go too; you may throw me off, but I will follow you; you may resolve, but I will defeat your resolutions. Mr. O'Grady, Frederick—all, all, will support me, and you must yield to their decision."

"I accept your offer. I shall abide by the opinion of Mr. O'Grady; speak to him, if you please it; state your case, repeat my words, and if he judges you are right, then will I listen to your reasonings; but if he joins with me in reprobating your impetuous conduct, I need not appeal to your honour, for I know you will abide by his decision."

"That is unfair, Alice; his misconceived ideas of honour will cause him to coincide with you; your opinions will weigh with him against me; and I cannot promise to agree in the verdict which he will give. But, Alice, tell me, why this punctilious observance of propriety? Why this extraordinary abhorrence of the pas-

sion which I have confessed? From you, yourself, I must hear the facts, and I myself will judge your cause."

"I fear, Lord Portland, my condemnation would be certain, were I to leave my case in the hands of a judge so prejudiced as you are; but your generosity deserves from me that you should hear my reasons for my conduct, and I shall relate them candidly and openly to you, if you should wish it."

"Wish it, Alice! why ask me? You know my happiness has its aim in hoping that I may yet be blessed in calling you mine, and must not the cause of your refusal be a matter of vital consequence to me? Yes, I will patiently hear you to an end, and claim the 'privilege of deciding on your right of cruelty.'"

"The interest which you profess to feel for me induces me to speak as I am about to do, and confide to you the little that I know concerning myself. The words of a friend, whose truth was apparent in each action of her life, are the only proofs which I can adduce to you.

Born in a foreign land, the child of parents who forsook me, I was given to the care of Mrs. Beauclerk when only a few, very few hours old. Some mystery, which I have never yet endeavoured to solve, because I was forbid to do so, surrounds and encompasses me. If it were proper that I should be aware who and what I am, my beloved friend would have declared the truth; but she never did, and I should be unworthy of her affection were I to strive, when she is gone, to know what she did not wish me even to think upon.

“ She was at once a parent, a guide, an instructress, and a companion. The love which she bore to me can never be surpassed; no, more, it can never be equalled. With her I lost home, kindred, and protection; with her I lost all traces of those who have disowned me. I have followed the advice of Mrs. Beauclerk in craving the protection of a lady, whom with her last breath she has commanded me to obey implicitly; that guardian has accepted the trust, and from henceforward I trust to be enabled to

act as she thinks best. She has fixed upon a residence and protector for me, and I only wait his coming to separate from those only friends who felt for and pitied me. My Lord, I have done,—I have told you all I know. The rest is impenetrable to mortal eyes, but heaven in its own time can solve it.”

“ Alice, dearest Alice, I thank you ; your confidence has not been misplaced. But, far from causing me to alter the sentiments which I have declared, your recital has but made you a thousand times dearer to me. What matters it, my best beloved, that those who should have loved you, and protected you, disown their trust and forsake it ? What matters it that your birth is other than what it seems to be ? Does it change the love I bear for you, that you bear a name unworthy of you ? No, my Alice, my care shall protect you ; my rank shall uphold you ; my name shall be yours ; and you shall be to me my world. Alice, I never will forsake you, while life remains within the heart that only beats for you.”

“Forbear, my Lord; you speak impossibilities. Can you imagine that for selfish motives I would accept your rash though generous proposal? Can you imagine that, for the sake of rescuing myself from dependence, I would permit you to entail upon yourself remorse, self-condemnation, and opprobrium? If you think thus, Lord Portland, you wrong me. Your noble parents shall not (if I can help it) blush for their idol son’s union with an unknown adventuress. Your relatives and friends shall not scorn or look down upon the woman you would make your wife, and for her sake banish you from their notice and esteem. No, my Lord, as long as Alice Beauclerk lives, she will not disgrace the name with which friendship has invested her.”

“Alice, you do not love me, you cannot; if you did, you could not utter sentiments like those. If you loved me, Alice, you would care nothing for the world, or the world’s opinions; if you loved me, you would brave the world with me.”

“ You wrong me, Lord Portland. Shall I so far forget my sex as to add, that it is because I love you, fondly and devotedly love you, that I sacrifice my feelings to my sense of duty and your welfare. It is because I love you that I speak against your ruin. Intemperate youth (forgive the term) knows not how to bridle or control the passions which added years and increased experience enables them to overcome and disregard. The pursuits which now please you, and which now engage your attention, will ere long become joyless and uncongenial ; and before your prime of life is past, you will look back and remember with gratitude and gladness that Alice Beauclerk opposed herself to your destruction.”

“ Alice, my destruction will be caused by your rejection. When rumour brings to you the tidings of my ruin, and when confirmation reaches you that I have left my country, through your means, and over-scrupulous propriety, then, Alice, then I will be revenged.”

“ An acquaintance short as ours has been, my

Lord, does not warrant such depth of love as you profess to feel. One month has only passed since we were strangers to each other, and surely a passion formed so hastily must ere long prove evanescent."

"It may suit you, Alice, cold and calculating as you are, to count days, hours, and moments; but to me time makes no such restrictions; and if my love prove evanescent, it is because my life shall be so. But ——"

Here the door was thrown open, and Mrs. O'Grady entered the room, and interrupted the sentence which the Earl was commencing; and allowed Alice to seek in solitude the strength of resolution which she felt wavering before the reasonings of her admirer.

"I am afraid, Lord Portland, that you find this place very stupid," said Mrs. O'Grady, who, in the innocence of her heart, never suspected that she had broken up a conversation in which he felt his happiness was at stake.

"Not at all, Ma'am," replied he, endeavouring to calm the angry feelings which were warring

in his mind at Alice's inflexibility : " Not at all, Ma'am ; on the contrary, I think this one of the most delightful places in the world."

" Is it possible ?—well, I always thought Mr. O'Grady was mad to form such opinions as he did ; but since a nobleman of such taste as you possess agrees with him, why I suppose I must be ignorant of the beauties required in the country. Bye the bye, my Lord, are you of age yet ?"

" Yes Ma'am, law has proclaimed me at the age of discretion, although I sometimes cannot help doubting the truth of the fiat."

" Indeed you are wrong, begging your pardon, Lord Portland ; I think you have steadiness and circumspection beyond your years. I dare say your mother has not been idle in projecting an alliance for you."

" My mother may save herself the trouble of projecting any alliances for me, Mrs. O'Grady, for I shall never marry."

" Bless me, do not say so ; believe me, you

would have a great loss ; I never was so happy as since I was married, though many thought I had delayed too long.—I declare here is Mr. O’Grady.”

“Mrs. O’Grady, my dear,” said the counsellor, as he entered dripping with rain, which had fallen in torrents while he was out, “here is a letter for my pet Alice, something tells me it is to call her away from us.”

“God forbid !” said his wife, as she took the letter and proceeded up stairs to deliver it.

Alice received the letter of Mr. Dudley from her friend with tears, although she almost wished it might contain the notice for her departure from Kneuchtanoon, as she felt that while she remained there, nothing could shield her from the importunities of Lord Portland, whom she perceived had not the slightest intention of quitting it. On the other hand, she dreaded to leave her only friends, whose affections comforted her, and whose house had sheltered her ; and to embark upon the stormy sea of life without a

guide to warn, or a defender to protect her from the ills which surrounded her. She broke the seal, and read—

“ Mr. Dudley, of Dudley Grove, presents compliments to Miss Beauclerk, hopes she will be ready to accompany him in a day or two, (probably Monday or Tuesday, or perhaps Wednesday,) to Dudley Grove, where she is to remain under the protection of Mr. Dudley.”

Dudley Grove, July 31, 18—.

In vain did Lord Portland seek an interview with Alice, when he heard her departure was fixed upon to take place within a few days. In vain did he way-lay her, in vain did he write to her ; she would neither listen to him, nor receive any communications from him. She was immoveable. Rectitude and self-command conquered all the stratagems which he employed ; her decision was made, and she declared it to be irrevocable. He heard her speak of her intended journey, he heard the entreaties of her friends to

dissuade her from leaving them at all events until the autumn, and he saw the sorrowful, but resigned expression of her countenance as she declined them, and he was maddened. Unable to suppress his feelings, he sought Mr. O'Grady, and opened his mind to him, imploring his aid and assistance in endeavouring to overcome the scruples of Alice. He used all the rhetoric in his power to win the old gentleman to his purpose, and was frantic with rage at his refusal to interfere in the business. He said—

“ My Lord, what you have detailed to me has only proved the strength of Miss Beauclerk's understanding, and the rectitude of her principles. She has judged rightly, and when you give yourself time to think dispassionately on the subject, you will agree with me, as well as with her. You say she loves you, and that you are convinced she only rejects you from her sense of right. I agree with you, nay I am sure of it; she proves her love, and to my mind, more decidedly than if she at once accepted you. Were she a heartless and crafty girl, she would

not lose a second in uniting herself to you ; she would avail herself of your folly, and become your wife at once. But see how widely different is the case, though she loves you, she flies from you ; she leaves you unshackled, and prefers the humble paths of rectitude and honour, though rugged and perplexing, to those of deceit and deception, however alluring and inviting they may seem. You are young, too young to think of such a proceeding as marriage, only twenty-one, and Alice scarcely so much. Remember you are in my house, and do not bring discredit on it by following your untoward inclinations. Alice only waits the arrival of her newly-appointed guardian ere she leaves us, and I implore you will not venture to disturb the tranquillity which she was beginning to experience. Let me, my dear young friend, have your promise to leave matters as they are, and I will in return pledge myself to assist you in this matter at some future period, if you continue in maturer years to think as you now do, of our dear Alice."

The discourse of Mr. O'Grady did more to effect the wishes of Alice, than did all her expostulations and entreaties; and Lord Portland said, with fervour,—

“ Mr. O'Grady, I will abide by your counsel: dear as Alice is to me I will obey your wishes, and I promise to leave her without molestation for the present, more I cannot promise.”

“ It is enough, Lord Portland. You will, I am sure, feel repaid by the thanks of Alice for this self-denial; the matter shall remain locked in my bosom, and not even Mrs. O'Grady shall be made acquainted with what has passed upon the subject.” So saying, Mr. O'Grady and his guest separated.

CHAPTER X.

MR. DUDLEY arrived at Kneuchtnanoon, and his appearance and manner did not contribute to cheer the spirits of Alice. The odious vulgarity of his address, his self-sufficiency, and purse-proud arrogance, were too apparent not to be at once discovered, and he could not but observe that his presence was undesired. However, he soon made himself perfectly at home, and announced to Alice, with the air of a superior, that she should be ready to set off the next morning, at an early hour.

“The summons is rather sudden, Sir,” said Mr. O’Grady; “I do not think Miss Beauclerk will be prepared.”

“Can’t help it, Sir, she had notice enough.”

“ Mrs. O’Grady and I shall be most happy at having the pleasure of your company here until Miss Beauclerk is ready.”

“ Totally out of the question, Sir.”

“ Well, then, if you will not stay, Mr. Dudley, I will promise to bring the young lady to your house myself.”

“ You need not trouble yourself, Sir,—she must come.”

“ Must is rather a strong word where a lady is concerned,” said young Mansfield, colouring with rage at the impudence of the would-be gentleman.

“ May be it is,” was the civil answer, and a dead silence ensued. The Earl bit his lips with rage, and the tears stood in the eyes of Alice. Mr. Dudley turned to her, and said, “ I have engaged a chaise for your accommodation, it will be here in the morning at ten o’clock.”

“ Will there be room for my maid in it, or shall she proceed to Dudley Grove by any other conveyance?” said Alice.

“Maid, maid,—what maid do you mean?” inquired Mr. Dudley.

“Miss Beauclerk’s, Sir,” replied Mr. O’Grady, growing very angry.

“Indeed, then there is not, Miss. I never heard of a maid before, and even if I did she should not come, as we have no room for strange servants in my well-regulated house.”

“Mrs. O’Grady put an end to the conversation, by saying to Alice, loud enough for Mr. Dudley to hear,—

“Alice, love, your servant shall remain with us, until you return here, or until you go where you may require her; but as we look forward to soon having you back with us, we hope it may not be worth your while to remove her.”

Dudley stared, and opened as wide as he could his green saucer eyes, and his immense flukish mouth, but he said nothing, and soon after an enormous dinner toddled off to bed, to strengthen himself by sleep for the exertions of to-morrow, a journey being to him an unusual and peculiar annoyance.

Mathews was vociferous in her indignation, when she found that she would not be permitted to accompany her young mistress to her new residence. She poured forth torrents of abuse, and implored her young lady to reject the protection of Mr. Dudley, and remain with those who so truly loved her.

“ No, Mathews, I cannot,” replied Alice; “ I promised my beloved aunt to follow her counsels and instructions, and I would do so were she living ; shall I, therefore, because she is taken from me, refuse obedience to the very first act I am required to comply with ? I will go, my dear Mathews ; if I am not happy in my new home, those who style themselves my friends will not surely force me to remain with people whom I do not like. I will try Mr. Dudley,—he may be more estimable than he appears to be. We shall soon meet, my dear nurse, and we shall not do so less happily because we did what we should have done. Good night, Mathews!—though we part my heart shall be with you until we shall meet again, I trust, to part no more.”

In the morning, after an early breakfast, the old and ruinous chaise which was to convey Alice away drove to the door, and Mr. Dudley bustled about, inspecting the arrangements of the packages and boxes, which were numerous.

“ Upon my word, Miss Beauclerk, you have traps enough at any rate ; where in the world did you pick them up, or how did you come by them ? ” said he, as he surveyed the travelling paraphernalia of his young companion.

“ From her friends, Sir, and not by your assistance,” answered Mathews with rage and floods of tears. “ Miss Alice, darling, the rest of your boxes I’ll cord up, and have ready against you want them,” continued she, for the purpose of still further astonishing Mr. Dudley, who, however, did not notice her rebukes, but stepped into the vehicle, leaving the lady to follow.

Handed in by Frederick, and surrounded by the O’Gradys and their household, Alice looked about her for the Earl ; but he was absent, and she was scarcely allowed time to say farewell,

when Mr. Dudley gave the word of command, and the carriage was driven rapidly away from all that loved her.

Bitter, bitter tears of sorrow were shed by Alice, as at each turning in the avenue and road she endeavoured to catch a glimpse of the dwelling where she had experienced such friendship; and as by degrees the more cultivated appearance of the country denoted the lengthening of the distance from it, her sobs became less violent, and her over-strained feelings gave way to the torpor of despair.

As she stooped to take up her reticule, which had fallen, she observed within it a letter. A glance sufficed to tell her from whom it came, and what were its contents. Taking it from its concealment, she hid it more securely in her bosom, comforted to find that one memorial of him she loved was left her.

“ Devilish queer people in that wild bog,” said Mr. Dudley, “ I would take my oath they are all mad, especially the old chap; they do not seem to relish me, but no love lost, I think.

'Tis well for you to get away from them, and go amongst Christians." He paused, expecting an answer. As none was granted, he continued—

"What did you pay 'em for your diet and lodging?"

"Nothing, Sir; Mr. O'Grady is not in the habit of letting lodgings."

"I believe not, indeed, not so much good in him; but I'll go bail he'll not forget to charge for you to my lady after all.—They were killing polite to you, eating you up with civility and blarney, except the tall, thin man, who has more sense than the whole boiling of them. What was this you all called him?"

"Lord Portland, Sir."

"Portland,—I remember to have known his mother; what is your own name?"

"Beauclerk, Sir."

"Beauclerk I know, but your Christian name I mean."

"Alice, Sir."

"So it is; you'll have a namesake at Dudley Grove."

“ Indeed, Sir.”

“ Yes, Alley is the name of our housemaid. I don’t like foolish, unmeaning names, Alleys or Bettys, or Peggys, or such like ; now I have set an example to the world by naming my girls Faith, Hope, and Charity ; they show at once the dispositions of the owners ; don’t you think so, Alley ?”

“ Miss Beauclerk, if you please, Sir.”

“ Nonsense, girl ; Alley you say is your name, and Alley you shall be called by me.”

The meek spirit implanted in the breast of Alice prevented a reply that was rising to her lips, and she allowed Mr. Dudley to proceed with his discourse.

“ How old are you ?”

“ Nearly twenty-one, I believe, Sir.”

“ Humph ! nearly the age of my girls. Pray can you play upon the instrument ?”

“ What instrument do you mean, Sir ?”

“ Instrument, why *the* instrument, to be sure.”

“ If you mean the harp or piano-forte, Sir, I play on both.”

“ Harp and piano,—as sure as a gun you are learned, are you ?”

“ I do not exactly know what you mean by being learned, Sir ; but as far as understanding the science of music goes, I believe I can say I am.”

“ Mighty fine, ’pon my conscience, Miss ; but never mind it ; I think you will find your match at Dudley Grove, if I don’t very much mistake ; pray who are you ?”

“ Miss Beauclerk, as I have told you before.”

“ Why as for that, I have my doubts, I can tell you ; may be, you know as little about yourself, my dear, as your neighbours do.”

“ This much at least, Mr. Dudley, I know, that your rudeness and unkindness exceed any idea which I could have formed ; you will recollect yourself if you please, Sir, and learn, when next you address a lady, to speak as befits a gentleman.”

“ Hoity toity ! never was a truer saying than ‘ set a beggar on horseback, and he’ll ride to the devil.’ It is you, my damsel, should

mind yourself, and speak as you should to your betters."

Alice remained silent; the brutal manners of her companion seemed by degrees, as they were unopposed, to become more subdued; and during the remainder of their day's journey, he made several ineffectual attempts to enter into conversation with her; but as she remained silent, and unmindful of his various interrogatories, he thought it best to keep himself quiet; and after some little lapse of time fell into a sound sleep; from which he did not waken until the carriage drove into the court-yard of the hotel, where he had arranged to pass the night.

CHAPTER XI.

THE remainder of the journey to Dudley Grove was unattended with any incident of note ; and Alice prepared herself to meet a reception from the other members of the family similar to the deportment of its master, which had been marked by such excessive rudeness.

Towards the close of the second day, a number of strange, uncommon lime kilns, of extraordinary form and unusual dimensions, drew her attention, and at the same time elicited from Mr. Dudley a declaration of their having arrived upon his property.

“ Here you will begin to perceive my exercises of talent and ingenuity. You first see my newly-invented lime kilns, designed to burn as

much lime in an hour as could be produced from the common sort in a month. I intend to take out a patent for 'em, if I find on trial that they will answer, which I am quite convinced they will.—From this turning you can get a peep of my self-demolishing stone pounder, erected for the purpose of breaking several tons of stone fit for Macadamizing roads in one minute, thereby saving an incredible expense, not to mention time, &c. Now through the trees, from this point, you see the house of Dudley Grove, a perfect model of taste and architecture—the plan all my own. That beautiful projection in front is the staircase, which I forgot in building the house ; however it is of no consequence now, as the tower contains it, and gives an air of strength to the dwelling.—Here we are just going over my celebrated subterranean passage to the gardens, a capital invention to preserve fruit and vegetables from the sun, on their way to the kitchen ; it also forms a delicious walk in hot weather for the ladies.—Now you see my famous dairy to the left, quite my own idea, I assure

you ; the milk pans always floating about in pure spring water, with an ice-house under them. I have just built a boat for the dairy woman, whom my clever girls call the lady of the lake ; sweet thought, wasn't it ? every one admires my dairy, so rural, so uncommon ; but you will see I have every thing at Dudley Grove out of the common.—Now observe my range of offices ; in the centre you see a dome, a miniature representation of that of St. Peter's ; under it is my new patent potato washer, which will cleanse one hundred and twenty-four pounds, two ounces, and three quarters of potatoes, in six minutes, three seconds, and a half. Oh, here we are at last ; darling place !—dear girls ; beautiful steps, neat knocker !”—So saying, Mr. Dudley stepped out of the chaise, leaving Alice to the care of a fine, strapping, shoeless nymph, who had appeared to open the door, and welcome her master.

“ Into the parlour, Miss, 'an you plase.”

And into the parlour walked Alice, who felt happy that it was unoccupied, and that she

should have time to dry her eyes, and appear indifferent to her reception.

An hour, if not more, passed before any one appeared ; and she had time to take a view of the room into which she had been ushered. It was octagon, with as many doors and windows as there were sides ; it was unpainted, though from the dark and discoloured appearance of the wood it was evidently long expecting such a visitation. It was unpapered, though heaps of paintings covered the greater part of the walls : quantities of chairs, innumerable tables, several sofas, and every sort of seat that could be possibly invented, choked up the apartment, scarcely leaving room to walk. The attempts at fashionable litter and irregularity were, however, so defaced by want of taste and vulgarity, that Alice had not a doubt upon her mind that the pretensions of Mr. Dudley and his family at elegance and style were only those of parvenus, and people of yesterday.

“ How do you do ? ” spoke a hoarse voice. Alice looked round, and perceived a large, coarse

looking woman, whom she at once guessed to be Mrs. Dudley, of Dudley Grove. She rose to receive the civilities of the lady, who most politely stared at her from head to foot.

“Glad to see you, Miss; sit down, I am afraid I kept you a long time, but I was so glad to see Mr. Dudley, and my girls said you would have enough to amuse you in looking at all the things; are you tired, honey?”

“A little, Ma’am,” said Alice, feeling grateful for the kind, motherly manner in which the inquiry was made.

“You are, my dear, and your eyes are red; don’t fret, we’ll take care of you; you shall have some dinner.”

“Not for me, thank you, Ma’am.”

“That is right, for Mr. Dudley won’t have any either, only a poached egg or two with his tea,—come with me till I show you my girls.”

Alice followed Mrs. Dudley, and in an adjoining room was introduced to the young ladies, as they were still called, though Miss Dudley,

if the truth was known, was in her fortieth year, and her sisters not much behind.

“ Here, my darlings, is Miss Beauclerk ; Miss Beauclerk, my daughters.”

Alice curtsied to the trio, who barely returned it ; she felt abashed, and took the seat which their mother offered her, and turned to attend to what she was saying.

“ The day was uncommon hot, I thought the pigs would run mad entirely, I suppose you kept the windows down in the chay, Miss ?”

“ We did, Ma’am.”

“ I am sure of it. Are you dry ? for the heat kills me ; my mouth is as dry as a drum.”

“ Thank you,—I would be glad of a glass of water.”

“ Oh, not without you take a drop of something in it ; will you have a glass of spirits in it ?”

“ No, I thank you, but as you are so kind, I would take a cup of milk.”

“ Milk ! why you see, Miss Beauclerk, I never

like to disturb the pan, if I can help it; for when once I stir milk, the cream is gone."

"I beg your pardon, ma'am; I should be quite sorry to put you to any inconvenience. Water will answer me."

"Very well. Charity, will you call Peg to bring a sup of clean water?"

"You are as near the door as I am myself, mamma," replied Charity, with a toss of the head, which indicated to Alice that Mrs. Dudley was kept in good order.

"So I am, love," replied she, as she went out to summon Peg; and Alice was obliged to hear the dialogue which passed outside.

"Peg! Peg!"

"Ma'am."

"Have you any clean water within?"

"Divil a sup, ma'am, barrin' the kettlefull for the tay."

"Send Alley for a jug."

"Alley is milking the cows."

"Run yourself; the strange lady is very dry."

“Faith, if she is, she may go for id hursel, for I am too busy.”

“Miss Beauclerk, I am sorry we have not any water within, and that you must wait for tea.” And Mrs. Dudley sat down, quite satisfied that she had exerted herself sufficiently.

Mr. Dudley now appeared, rubbing his hands, and, looking quite pleased, exclaimed, “How are you now, Alley? Hope you like Dudley Grove; you see it to great advantage; when it will be finished, it will be worth looking at. You must take a walk to-morrow with the girls, to see the grounds and gardens.”

“We shall be engaged, sir,” said Faith, with a look at her sisters.

“Well, if you are, darlings, Alley can walk out by herself.”

“Mr. Dudley, dear, will you have tea now?”

“Yes, Mrs. Dudley, love; I think I can pick a bit. How are the eggs, my dear?”

“Pretty well, Mr. Dudley: we tried the bracket hen, and found she had an egg; so we put her into your new laying-house, but by

some mischance we found her dead; I think she was smothered."

"Very likely; that laying-house was not exactly as well planned as I generally do those sort of things. However, I can remedy it in future."

The entrance of tea, poached eggs, muffins, toast, and many other equally palatable eatables, were now brought in by Peg.

"Where is Patrick, Mrs. Dudley, that he is not attending as usual?"

"He was out reaping all day, my dear."

"That is unfortunate; but we won't make a stranger of Miss Beauclerk, by calling him in. Now, this delightful cup of tea is quite a restorative. Charity, get me a little drop of brandy. It is astonishing how well I can make a meal on tea and muffins. By the bye, Mrs. Dudley, did you preserve the last firkin of butter by my receipt?"

"Yes, my dear, but it was turned out of the market yesterday, and sent to the Mendicity;

and the butter-taster told Alley never to dare to bring putrid butter again to him."

"Putrid butter! the man is a fool, Mrs. Dudley; he can't know what butter is, but I'll teach him the difference."

"Do, Mr. Dudley. Miss Beauclerk, you are not eating a morsel. What signifies a muffin or two? and you have not eaten half a one. Oh, Mr. Dudley! wait until I tell you: sure there is a letter from Lady Arlingham, with another inside it from a great lady —— Lady Cornwall."

"Goodness gracious, my dear! what wonder is there in Mr. Dudley, of Dudley Grove, receiving a letter from the Countess of Arlingham, and another from his friend the Marchioness of Cornwall, occurrences that you see taking place every day?" replied Mr. Dudley, with a triumphant smile and look at Alice.

"Very true, my dear. Lady Cornwall wrote a tip-top, first-rate, elegant letter (for Hope opened it), and said a great deal about your

meeting her at Lady Arlingham's; and that she would thank you to pay every attention in your power to Sir Leopold Lindorf, a particular friend of hers, who is coming on business to this neighbourhood. She says he is a rich bachelor; and as the girls were saying, who knows what luck they may have?"

"Mrs. Dudley, how you do talk! I am sure Miss Beauclerk is tired, and would like to go to her room," interrupted the master of the house, with a wink to his wife; who, taking the hint, proposed to Alice to retire, which offer was most gladly accepted by the tired and forlorn girl.

"I think you will be snug, my dear," said Mrs. Dudley; "this is the most comfortable room in the house: it was our nursery. Here is a press for your clothes, and a place to hang up your cloak. If you want any thing, rap with your foot, and Peg will come to you; for the kitchen is under this room. Good night."

As the door closed after Mrs. Dudley, Alice burst into tears, and felt that she was indeed humbled. The miserable appearance of her

room, the poorness of its furniture, and the extreme heat which was caused by its approximation to the kitchen fire, all tended to awaken her to her miserable situation; and she resolved rather to earn her bread than be compelled to remain upon the forced hospitality of the savages with whom she was. While thinking thus bitterly, and weeping, she remembered the letter of Lord Portland, which she had but hastily read on the preceding night; and taking it from her bosom, she, with the still sufficient light, again perused the beloved lines.

“ You leave me, Alice, and without a hope. You leave those who love you, and who would protect you for selfish and unfeeling strangers; and you part from me without one consoling word, without one commiserating look. Alice, you cannot love me; if you did, you could not scorn me thus. When you receive this letter, you will be gone, you will be far from me; and pity will induce you to open it, to read it, though love cannot. But though experience shows me that you will be unmindful of its

contents, and my entreaties; still hope whispers that time may prove more effectual than my prayers. I will not forget you, though perchance you may think I will; and wherever you are, there will I be too. Oh, Alice, it is a bitter and a galling thought to ponder on the ruin of our happiness—to brood upon the destruction of our cherished hopes; but so it is, and nought now remains to me but misery. I have confided to Mr. O'Grady the secret of my love, and though he pities me, he refuses to assist me; but, with more of kindness than you have shown, he holds out hopes of yet befriending me. He promises at some future time to use his influence, should I continue unsuccessful. But it will not do; I cannot live on hope deferred. Alice, vouchsafe one line, one word, to comfort and sustain me. The most distant period, the most lengthened term will suffice me; and years of bondage will be as days of joy if you name the termination of our disunion. I will trust to you, my heart's idol; you will

not again command me to despair. Write, Alice; write but one word to me, and remember in your prayers your Alfred."

Laying this letter under her pillow, Alice resigned herself to thought and retrospection, for sleep was out of the question; the broiling heat and the voices of the servants precluding it, even if she had any hopes of being able to court the approach of its "downy pinions," which had for long flown from her aching head and agitated frame.

At the earliest light, the voice of Mrs. Dudley rousing her servants reached the ear of Alice, who was not sorry to rise from her uncomfortable couch, and she was soon dressed and out to refresh herself with the morning air. Crowds of turkeys, chickens, geese, and ducks, surrounded her as she quitted the house, and almost deafened her with their vociferous cackling. She hurried from them as fast as she could, in dread of the angry fathers of the

broods, who seemed to think her appearance amongst them indicated and portended the loss of some of their feathery nurslings.

The air was mild and invigorating, the dews were lingering on the shrubs and grasses, and Alice remained abroad until the stentorian lungs of a servant brought to her remembrance that she had not breakfasted, and she with regret prepared to answer the summons which she had received.

The family were assembled, and had all nearly completed their morning meal on her entrance. Mr. Dudley barely acknowledged her presence by a nod, while his daughters appeared unaware of it, and Mrs. Dudley spoke for all.

“Good morrow, Miss; I hope you slept sound and snug. You see, we didn’t wait for you; it would be against Mr. Dudley’s rules; and ’tis a quarter past nine.”

Cold tea, tepid eggs, tough toast, and strong salt butter, were but poor incentives to eat; so that Alice did not long detain the breakfast things, which Peg was removing, while she

strove to swallow the nauseous beverage for appearance sake. The young ladies in curl papers, loose untidy morning wrappers, and slip-shod shoes, threw themselves upon the sofas, and were soon deep in the mysteries of some old romances. Seeing no chance of forming an acquaintance with them, Alice went to her room to unpack her clothes and books, and while doing so was enabled to hear the conversation of the lady of the house with her factotum Peg, which, as it was only connected with culinary affairs and domestic arrangements, did not much interest her. When fatigued with her employment she returned to the sitting-room, and as it was empty took the opportunity of trying a piano which was in it; but she was not long allowed to amuse herself thus, for a message from Miss Dudley through Peg informed her that the young ladies were not well, and would thank her to cease playing. Of course she was obliged to obey, and closing the instrument, she determined never again to open it; and by reading endeavoured to wile away the long and

tedious day. Dinner again assembled the family, and again was Alice obliged to endure the haughty tosses of the heads of the three Miss Dudleys, who one and all ate as if they never ate before.

“My dear,” said Mrs. Dudley to her husband, “I hope you like the salad to-day.”

“It is admirable, Mrs. Dudley; this lamb does me a great deal of credit; it was fattened under my new system. I am a strange man to be sure. I never care what I eat; I can at all times make my dinner off lamb and salad.”

“Well to be you, Mr. Dudley, dear; I hate epicures; sure never was a man so easily pleased as you.”

“True, Mrs. Dudley; this lamb is roasted to a turn; a quarter of lamb should never be to the fire longer than thirty minutes; and a few seconds under or over, I assure you, does make a difference. Now, this salad is as it should be; egg, cream, mustard, and vinegar, not too much or too little of any thing. Pray, Mrs. Dudley,

have you tapped any of my last brewing with the improvements?"

"Yes, my dear, but it was vinegar; so I threw it out."

"Vinegar? how strange! There must have been something wrong in the cask, for I reckoned on its being admirable."

"Indeed! I think it would have been good, but for the want of hops and malt, Mr. Dudley."

"There now, my dear, that is the rock you split on. Hops and malt are the old jog-trot ingredients; now I want to strike out something out of the common; if such experiments were never made, and if there were no such men as Darby Dudley, there never would be any thing new in the world."

"Certainly, Mr. Dudley, I know that. Miss Beauclerk, you eat nothing; indeed, you must try a bit of sweetbread; pray do, you can't live if you don't eat."

"I would rather not, Ma'am, thank you."

“ Ah, do, now, let me cut you a mouthful.”

“ Mamma,” said Faith, “ you will never remember how rude it is to force people ; send me the sweetbread.” And the sweetbread was accordingly handed to, and eaten by the polite young lady.

But an account of one day spent at Dudley Grove would give an idea of a year, for nothing could equal or exceed the sameness which prevailed in that dwelling—Mr. Dudley for ever planning improvements, his wife housekeeping, and their progeny sentimentally busied in novels and romances, from which they seldom stirred, unless to take a drive in their newly-acquired barouche. As Alice was never included in the visiting or driving parties, she was obliged to amuse herself as best she could, and found Dudley Grove a never-failing source of wonder. The house, resembling in shape and size an enormous store, was totally unfinished ; so much had been begun at once that nothing was ever finished. Though built for more than twenty years, the building had never received a

coat of paint, or a morsel of paper. The doors, badly hung, admitted every breath of air and gust of wind that blew through the long, winding and unmeaning passages of the edifice. The rooms, grotesque in shape, enormous in size, and deficient in proportions, were filled—nay, crammed with lumber, useful and otherwise. And these numberless apartments were seldom inhabited, excepting on company occasions, as the family always lived in an abominably confined housekeeper's closet, where all the household stores were piled, and kept under the watchful eye of their mistress.

One apparatus for heating a set of rooms with boiling water, lay here: another for warming a bed-chamber with smoke lay there; a set of implements for purposes unknown, but which were to ensure their projector a patent, appeared in the hall, alongside of a miniature steam-carriage, designed to travel at the rate of fifty miles an hour through the garden walks.

The outside was in keeping with the inside. Unfinished granaries, unglazed stables, unpaved

yards, every thing undone that should be done, and every thing done that should not be done ; all was in confusion, all was irregular. New forms for every thing, new plans, and new constructions ; nothing was like to what it should be, and day after day only saw changes and alterations, and time and money thrown away, in order that time and money should be saved.

“ A letter for you, Alley,” said Mr. Dudley one day ; “ I wonder who it can be from, and money letter marked upon it.”

“ From a friend, Sir,” replied Alice.

“ What friend sends you money ?”

“ My agent, Sir.”

“ Agent the devil ! what have you to do with an agent ?”

“ The same that any one else has, Sir ; to receive money for me.”

“ I thought you hadn’t any thing, Alley, but what Lady Arlingham allowed you through me.”

“ Then you thought wrong, Sir.”

“ Maybe so, but open your letter and show me the bill or note, for you might be cheated.”

“Not the least probability of that, Sir.”

“Shall I keep it for you, my dear?”

“Thank you, no, Sir; it will not be an encumbrance to me,” said Alice, as she rose and left the room to avoid the impertinence and curiosity of her host, who on her departure turned to his wife, and exclaimed—

“Mrs. Dudley, you must make out where she gets this money, and how much it is: for if she is independent of us, we must be more circumspect in our manner towards her; she might slip through our fingers, and we’d lose the hundred a year.”

“I told you, my dear, that there was more in her than met the eye; I knew, by her trunks and boxes, she was somebody; I am sorry we put her in the old nursery.”

“So am I, Mrs. Dudley. You must be sweet on her. Could we pretend the state-room was damp when she came, and that it was aired now?”

“No, Mr. Dudley; for she heard me helping Peg to settle it for the great man, Lady Arlingham’s friend’s friend.”

“ That is true ; however, as I am a good planner, I can settle matters : I wrote to Lady Cornwall this morning, that her friend should come to us at once instead of sleeping at ———. How do you know, Mrs. Dudley, but I may serve myself with him, and get an agency or something out of him ? ”

“ May be he'd marry Faith, Hope, or Charity, Mr. Dudley.”

“ Certainly he might do worse, Mrs. Dudley ; ” and off Mr. Dudley walked, to plan and project, leaving Mrs. Dudley to uncover the furniture in case of the sudden arrival of the guest who had been recommended to their hospitality by their patroness's friend, Lady Cornwall.

CHAPTER XII.

“ A GENTLEMAN below, Miss Bukler ; he wants to see you for wan minit, miss, av ye plase.”

“ Who is it, Peggy ?”

“ Can’t say, Miss, in respect ov not knowin ; bud he is a gentleman to the back-bone, every inch ov him.”

“ How do you know he wants me ?”

“ Bekase he sed he did, Miss, and quite illegant slipped this bran new goold sovereign into my hand.”

“ Tell him, Peggy—no, never mind—stop, say—I believe I must go myself for a moment,” stammered Alice. Her face crimsoned with alarm as she surmised who it was ; recollecting

herself, however, she added, "You had better ask him his name, Peggy."

"No use for me, Miss; I did that afore, an' the answer mese'f got, 'A friend of Miss Bukler's.' So you had betther go, and not be afther keepin' him, the crathur."

Alice rose to follow the advice of Peg, and, struggling to be calm, descended to the room where the stranger had been shown. For a moment she paused ere she opened the door, her heart beat violently, her hand trembled so dreadfully that she could scarcely turn the lock; and when she had power to do so, and enter, she beheld the being she dreaded though expected to meet—Lord Portland.

"My own, my beloved Alice!" he whispered, as he caught her to his heart, unmindful of her struggles to prevent him; "I knew you would not refuse to see me, my darling, idolized Alice!"

"You make me regret, my lord, my rashness in not refusing you. Be calm, and I will listen

to you, though my conscience whispers I am wrong in doing so."

"Wrong, Alice? Oh, if you knew what I have suffered since I lost you, you would not blame yourself for granting me this happiness! Four weeks have crept like four times as many years since then, and, Alice, they have been ages of bitterest affliction. And you have suffered too: the roses of health and happiness are flown, and traces of tears and unhappiness have usurped their places. Oh, my beloved! say that you repent your cruelty, and that you will accept me; say that I may live to hope!"

The changed appearance of Lord Portland, his apparent sorrow, and his impressive manner, conquered the forced composure of Alice, and she burst into tears; Lord Portland drew her to a sofa, and, seating himself beside her with his arms around her, waited until she had become comparatively calm, when he addressed her.

"Those tears are harbingers of joy, my Alice! they promise that you will relent, they

evidence the sorrow which our separation caused, and they forerun the smiles of happiness which soon shall supersede them.”

“ You are mistaken; they only flow from grief and sorrow, the only portion left to me on earth. The weeks which have elapsed since last I saw you, have not passed less miserably with me than you describe them; but they have left me as they found me, decided and unaltered. You cannot know the anguish you have added by this visit; I had begun to feel the comfort of well-doing, and had almost fancied myself resigned to fate, when in a moment I find myself unnerved and thrown back again upon my sorrows. My lord, why add to my unhappiness, why continue yourself a victim to it?”

“ Because, Alice, I cannot help myself. I have tried, I have endeavoured to forget you, but I cannot. I have been at home; I have been amongst the gay, the glad, and the happy; I have plunged into the excitements of the world; I have quitted those scenes of felicity

where we met; but all, all was unavailing. One image, one form, one thought, was always present to my mind; one voice was always in mine ear. Oh, Alice! if you could behold my heart, you would see and believe how I adore you."

"I believe you, Lord Portland; I know you love me, and from my soul I sorrow for it."

"I doubt it, Alice; but no matter now. I leave my country for ever; you have made me an alien from it, you have turned it into a desert. Within a few short hours I quit you and it for ever, and, Alice, with a cruelly broken heart."

"No, Lord Portland, this must not be. Summon reason to your help, discard the blandishments of passion, and be again yourself. Why should Alice Beauclerk presume to influence the destiny of one who is so far beyond her in wealth, birth, and condition; why should she interfere with those above her? She will not; she does not wish for the place in your affections which you offer her; and to your honour does

she leave it to separate from her, and allow her to pass the residue of her years in unpretending and unblemished rectitude."

"Yes, Alice, you shall be left; but my decision for myself is as unchangeable as yours. If I leave you, I also separate from the world, and that for no transitory time, but as long as life is granted to me. Fare thee well, Alice! You have been, and shall always be, obeyed."

He rose as he ceased speaking, and approached the door.

"My lord," said Alice; but he heeded her not. "Lord Portland," she called, in vain. "Alfred!" The word restored him. She had never before called him thus. He turned—he resumed his seat—and Alice felt that her resolution was gone.

"I am wrong, indeed, to tamper thus, Lord Portland, with your feelings; but I could not part from you, and know that parting was a final one and an angry one, without suing for your pardon, and seeking to know your destination when you leave me. It may be weak of

me thus to intrude upon your secret plans, but I cannot help it."

"I leave England, Alice, within a day or two."

"Yes, but surely you propose shortly to return?"

"My return will never be. I have accepted a diplomatic situation, for the sake of being allowed a feasible pretext for leaving home. When gone, I can the better account for my protracted absence."

"And is your determination thus fixed?"

"As surely as I am a true and living man, unless you grant me hopes that on my return you will listen to me."

Alice paused; the earl drew her still closer to him—her head rested on his shoulder—his lips touched her throbbing forehead, and murmured, "Alice, will you pity me?"

The answer was made in such agitated tones, that only it was a lover's ear that listened, it would have been inaudible; but he heard, "I will!" and all his previous sufferings were in a moment cancelled. The feelings of Lord Port-

land may be imagined, but they cannot be described; for long did he remain unconscious of all save the knowledge of the hope which had been granted, and the transition from doubt and despair to hope and joy, seemed to have well nigh paralyzed his senses. At last he spoke:—

“ Alice, my well-beloved, I have not words wherewith to pour out to thee the thanksgivings of my soul. You can feel and know that I am happy, and that will suffice. Alice, we need never separate !”

“ Alfred, we must; years must intervene ere the fulfilment of our engagement can arrive. You asked but for hope and pity; I only granted what you required. We must separate; we must part; but surely, though we do, we have the consolation of knowing that at a future time we shall be united, and that in the interim we are indissolubly affianced to each other.”

“ ’Tis true, Alice—all, all true; but I am not yet content. Some lurking doubts disturb the happiness of this hour; some inward whisperings

admonish me to beware. Absence from the object of one's love is a calamity I dread. I know not why it is; but I feel we should not part, Alice."

"And why not, Alfred? I have promised to give you hope; I will fulfil my promise; but you must adhere to my advice, and abide by it. You have accepted a trust—discharge it; and on your return at the expiration of it, I solemnly promise to be yours."

"But, my beloved, I shall be detained I know not how long a time; I might perhaps be from you for one entire year."

"So much the better;—would that it were even longer!"

"Alice, only I have become so great a debtor to you, I should be tempted to cavil at your words. But a thought strikes me, dearest: if we were now united—nay, now, Alice, do not start and look displeased—I but propose a scheme. If we were now united, I would leave you until your pleasure recalled me. I would

bind myself to bear with years of separation, if I were but sure that hand and heart were mine, and mine only."

"Alfred, do you doubt me? Can you think that absence will blight my love, or turn it cold? Can you suppose me false? If you think or suppose thus, you had better leave me disengaged; for the possession of a heart thus worthless would be a loss and a disgrace."

"Pardon me, Alice; I did not mean thus. I only hoped to win consent from you for our private union. Blest with the security of your being my wife, I would bear with absence—years, years of absence."

"It is useless, Alfred; your persuasions are unavailing. I have gone already further than I ought, in promising so much."

"But will my Alice still be constant? will she bear in mind her promises and her engagements, and prove true to her absent Alfred?"

"I will, Alfred. Here do I solemnly pledge my hand and word, and trust to be enabled to preserve my faith as long as you keep yours."

“ As long as I keep mine ! then, Alice, your faith is pledged for ever ; but I may write, and sometimes hope to hear from you.”

“ No, certainly not. On that subject I shall be decided. I will not receive or write letters ; it might be attended with unpleasant circumstances to me in my unprotected state.”

“ Unprotected state !—Ah, Alice, my love, ‘ there is the rub.’ Let me but have a right to protect you, and I leave you happy.”

“ Cease, Alfred, again I implore you. It is time that you were gone. Remember, I must respect appearances.”

“ Your host, Alice, was pleased to signify to me, upon the day of your departure, that he would be glad to see me here : may I not encroach upon his kindness for one day ?”

“ You may, but I would rather not, for fear of rousing the suspicions of the family.”

“ But surely I would be rude, and it would appear strange were I to go without paying my compliments to the master of the house.”

“As you please ; but how have you left our friends ?”

“Well as you could wish them. I left them on the day of your departure. Frederick accompanies me abroad.”

Alice rose and rang the bell. Patrick, dressed in a full suit of sky-blue livery, with yellow facings, and crimson breeches, answered it.

“Is your master within ?”

“I’ll ax him, Miss.”

“Say, if you please, Lord Portland wishes to see him.”

“Be all manes I shall, Miss.” And out walked Patrick.

His master almost immediately made his appearance, dressed to the utmost advantage. He walked up to the earl, shook hands with him, and welcomed him most cordially to Dudley Grove.

“Most extravagantly glad to see your lordship ; thought I knew you riding up the avenue, though, as you didn’t ask for me, I was sure I was mistaken.”

“ Why, I wished most particularly to do myself the honour of waiting upon you after your flattering invitation ; but as I had a message of importance to deliver to Miss Beauclerk, I discharged my commission first ; always adhering to the old proverb of ‘ business should precede pleasure.’ ”

“ Thank you, my lord ; I assure your lordship I shall have much pleasure in your agreeable society, and implore of you to remain a few days at Dudley Grove. I flatter myself we can make it worth your while.”

“ I am perfectly convinced of it, my dear Sir, and shall intrude upon you this night ; to-morrow I must leave you.”

“ Sorry for it, my lord, but happy you will stay to-night. My lady and daughters will be overjoyed.”

“ Charming place, this, Mr. Dudley !”

“ Happy you think so, my lord. It is a little out of the common.”

“ Quite so. Do you farm extensively ?”

“ Very, but all out of the usual way—nothing

in the general way; but here are the young ladies. Miss Dudley, the Earl of Portland—Earl of Portland, Miss Dudley; Miss Hope Dudley, the Earl of Portland—Earl of Portland, Miss Hope Dudley; Miss Charity Dudley, the Earl of Portland—Earl of Portland, Miss Charity Dudley.”

The young ladies descended nearly to the floor, rose with becoming grace, and swept past his lordship with a majestic step, seated themselves, and looked amiable.

The earl looked enchanted, returned the obeisances of the ladies, and reseated himself next to Mr. Dudley.

“A lovely day, my lord!” said Miss Dudley. Her sisters, who always echoed her words, chimed in,—

“A lovely day, my lord!”

“A lovely day, my lord!”

“Delightful, indeed, ma’am.”

“Hope you are not fatigued, my lord.”

“Hope you are not fatigued, my lord.”

“Hope you are not fatigued, my lord.”

“ Not at all, ladies, and trust you will allow me to join in your morning ramble, as I see you are prepared for it.

All together replied, “ With pleasure, my lord.”

Now the room was large, and there happened to be an admirable echo in it; so that when the three Miss Dudleys spoke they had a most powerful effect, and were not unlike an infant school, when the monitress exclaims, “ All together !” to keep alive the slumberers in her little assembly; and all the little shrill tones shriek out their reply in chorus.

CHAPTER XIII.

ORD PORTLAND, in a delirium of joy, appeared to the utmost advantage to the three graces. He was in raptures with the various inventions of Mr. Dudley; he was fascinated with his suggestions, and, in short, he completely ingratiated himself with them all in every possible manner. As he walked, with Charity leaning on one arm and Faith on the other, he incessantly turned and stopped to converse with Slope, who for that day was condescending enough to countenance Alice, and remain with her, following the footsteps of her more fortunate sisters.

As their noble visitor and their unpretending guest scarcely exchanged a syllable, the three

ladies never for a second suspected that any thing like love subsisted between them ; though as the business to Alice was the supposed and avowed cause of his lordship's visit, they thought it right and proper to break through their rules, and pay her a little more attention than they had ever ventured to do before. Mr. Dudley forgot the similarity of her name to that of his domestic, and with smiles addressed her as Miss Beauclerk, at the same time insisting on her leaning on him during their ramble.

However, Alice did not heed these flattering civilities, and walked silent and unmindful of the conversation which at times took place between the advanced guard and her companions. As her eyes would meet those of the earl, their saddened and mournful expression would damp the ardour of his words and check the gladness of his heart, until the faint but loving smile called up by seeing him would again rekindle in his breast the hopes and happiness with which he had been inspired.

The walk was ended, the ladies completed

their (for that day) tedious and elaborate toilet, dinner was announced, and for the first time Lord Portland had the honour of being presented to Mrs. Dudley, who, with her face inflamed from the kitchen fire, where she had been stationed to inspect the progress of dinner, her person decorated in bright scarlet satin, and her head enveloped in a bag-wig crowned with a yellow hat and white feathers, welcomed the young nobleman, if not with elegance, at least with warmth. She was seated at the head of her table on the entrance of her guests, as she did not wish to entrust Patrick or Peg with the adjustment of the dishes, and had remained watching and directing, as also for the purpose of cooling herself, as the day had been most excessively warm and close, and the kitchen broiling, from the numerous fires in Mr. Dudley's improved self-cooking kitchen range.

“Glad, my lord, to see your lordship at Dudley Grove,” said the lady. “What will you have, white soup or brown soup, my lord?”

“Neither, thank you, ma'am.”

“ Neither ! why bless and save me, that is odd ! for Mr. Dudley always takes soup, particularly when I make it.”

“ I have not the least doubt of its being excellent, ma’am, but I never take soup.”

“ Then I won’t press you, my lord. There is chickens and bacon, there is minced veal and tongue, there is fish and beef coming in : call for what you please, my lord.”

“ Thank you, ma’am ; I will trouble Miss Beauclerk for some chicken.”

“ Miss Beauclerk, honey, can you cut up a chicken ?”

“ I will try, ma’am.”

“ If you can’t, Hope will ; she carves elegant.”

“ Miss Beauclerk, permit Miss Hope Dudley to carve ; I shall be most happy to be helped by so fine a lady.”

“ Your politeness, my lord, is only equalled by your condescension,” said Mr. Dudley, as he took the chicken himself and cut it up.

“ My lord, there is bottled beer and draught beer, there is bottled cider and draught cider,

there is spruce beer and porter : call for what you like," said Mrs. Dudley, with a bone of chicken in her hand, which she was picking.

" I will take some cider, thank you, ma'am."

" Which cider, my lord ?"

" Which you please, ma'am."

" Then, Patrick, help Lord Portland to some draught cider. I don't think, Mr. Dudley, the new plan in bottling that cask of cider answered ; it turned quite black and sour."

" Have patience, Mrs. Dudley : I engage it will clear and sweeten yet," replied Mr. Dudley crossly to his better half, who, busily engaged in forcing Lord Portland to eat of every thing at table, did not seem to mind him.

" Do you ever eat tripes, my lord ?"

" Never, ma'am."

" For if you did, I could recommend that dish of 'em. Mr. Dudley doats upon tripe and cow-heel."

" Does he ? I believe they are very good for those who like them."

“ They are, though I hear they isn’t a company dish now.”

“ Really, ma’am, I cannot say.”

“ Indeed. I didn’t believe whoever it was told me, for I know the king, George the Third, was uncommon fond of ’em.”

“ I never remember to have heard of his Majesty’s professing such a fancy,” said the earl, with a smile.

“ Now, didn’t you? why then, indeed, it is a positive fact.”

“ Very possibly, ma’am. Miss Beauclerk, allow me the honour of taking wine with you.”

“ But, my lord, is it possible you never heard of His Majesty’s liking tripe and cowheel?” said Mrs. Dudley again.

“ Never, ’pon my honour; I assure you, ma’am, I never heard it.”

“ Well, as a proof of it, my brother, Mr. Cormick, (he was the great Mr. Cormick of Dublin—I am sure you often heard of him, my lord,) went to pay a visit to the king one morn-

ing (for my brother was uncommon intimate with the king), and after a good deal of chat on one thing or another, he said, ‘Mr. Cormick,’ says he, ‘did you see the queen to-day?’ ‘No, please your majesty,’ says he; upon which the king opened the door of an inner room, and called the queen. She came out with a deck of cards in her hand, and started back when she saw a stranger, as she supposed. ‘Oh, never mind, my dear!’ says the king; ‘’tis only Cosey and I,’ (for my brother’s name was Cosby, and his intimates always called him Cosey). ‘How do you do, Mr. Cormick?’ says the queen, shaking hands with him; ‘won’t you take a glass of wine this morning?’ ‘No, I thank you,’ says Cosey. ‘Do,’ says she; ‘’tis in the room.’ ‘I’d rather not,’ says he, for he was as abstemious a man as ever lived. ‘Well,’ says she, ‘I am sorry for it, and sorry, too, that we can’t ask you to dinner, as it is washing-day, and George and I doat upon tripe and cow-heel; so, to save trouble, we get that early.’”

“What nonsense, Mrs. Dudley, you always

talk," said her husband, enraged at her thus exposing her ignorance, and her brother, the great Mr. Cormick's habit of lying: "I wonder you can believe such stuff."

"Indeed, Darby, dear, it is no stuff at all, for Cosey" ——

"Damn Cosey," replied Mr. Dudley, stung to the quick by the visible inclination to laugh which he saw upon Lord Portland's handsome countenance. "My Lord, try this Madeira; I think you will like it; it is, I flatter myself, prime."

Dinner proceeded, and was ended, and to the great relief of Alice Mrs. Dudley rose to depart, and the gentlemen were left to themselves.

When arrived in the drawing-room, the ladies were loud—we might almost say, uproarious—in the praises of Lord Portland. He was voted beautiful, talented, accomplished, fascinating, and every other term that could be applied to his various merits. His condescension was commented upon, and in the excitement of the dis-

cussion, Mrs. Dudley happily escaped a rebuke which she had dreaded from her daughters, concerning the unlucky story about the king and tripes.

In the course of the evening Lord Portland proposed a walk, but as the ladies did not choose to venture under the dew, the proposition was negatived. The Earl secretly rejoiced at so unexpected a refusal, implored of Alice to join him for a few moments, as he should be compelled to set off early in the ensuing morning on his route to London. Unable to comply with his wishes, in consequence of the part which she had to act before the Dudleys, he was obliged to be content with her promise to meet him before his departure on the morrow. She retired for the night, leaving Lord Portland surrounded by his admirers; and as she lay down to rest, felt less of sorrow and more of happiness than she had experienced since the death of her aunt.

She rose early, and found the expectant Earl waiting impatiently her appearance. He had

bade adieu the night before to the family of Dudley Grove, and intended to hurry as rapidly as was in his power to meet and accompany his colleagues, who were in a few days to proceed on the embassy to which he had become an attache. For hours he had the happiness of conversing with his Alice on the one loved topic, and as he walked, or sat by her side, became forgetful of his intended journey, and the consequences of being discovered thus loitering with Alice. But as she implored him to depart, and reasoned on the necessity of his doing so, he was obliged to acquiesce, and tear himself away. They parted, little dreaming of the woes and troubles of the world which fate, with merciless decision, had predestinated them to undergo; and found, when separated, that life without each other was—a blank.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BOUDOIR, splendidly decorated and tastefully arranged, containing all the elegant and *recherché* articles which luxury and wealth could command, was occupied by a noble and majestic-looking lady, who with an open book before her, sat meditating, and communing with herself. Her dark and glossy hair was braided across her white and dazzling brow, on which time, as well as care, had left his mark, though art endeavoured to conceal it. The colour, which bright and vivid as the first bloom of youth upon her cheek, was but the delusive colouring of art; her even and unblemished teeth, pearly and white as those of infancy, were too but the

creations of all powerful art; while she herself, noble in birth, exalted in rank, and encompassed with riches, was but a being supported through the influence of art, and artful and deceitful as a very devil.

As she sat and thought, unmindful of all around her, the door of the boudoir opened, and ere she was aware of his presence, Lord Portland was at her side. An exclamation of surprise and delight escaped from the lady, who, casting her arms around him, exclaimed—

“My Alfred, my darling son.”

“Yes, mother, dearest mother, I have returned again but to say farewell; we sail to-morrow; in an hour I must leave you.”

“My blessing will be with you, Alfred. I had feared I should not see you ere you went. Where have you been, my love?”

“Will you forgive your truant Alfred, mother, when he tells you that he has been again in Ireland?”

“Ireland, my heart’s idol! Why, surely,

you had not been returned for more than two or three weeks from thence, when you again left us, in ignorance of your destination."

"True, most true, but"——

"But what, my child; surely, you cannot have a secret unknown to me?"

"Why, mother, I have had one, but it shall not longer be a mystery to you."

"I thank you, Alfred. Now reveal to me the cause or causes of your absence, for my heart yearns to know them."

"Mother, it was love!"

"I joy to hear it, my son. I know my Alfred has not misplaced his affections; I know his true and honourable heart would not permit him to bestow his love on one unworthy, or on one whom his fond mother could not take unto her bosom with pride, and say, She is my daughter. Fear me not, my child; open your heart unto me; divulge your doubts and joys, and repose them in my confidence."

"You often wished, my mother, that when I was of age I should choose a wife, and you have

often said that my father did not care for wealth or fortune."

" True ; we do not wish you to seek a wife for mercenary views ; neither do we wish you to select any that you cannot love ; your welfare and happiness are our only aim."

" I know it ; and I hope the choice which I have made will meet your joint approbation, though my love is devoid of fortune."

" It matters not, Alfred."

" Mother, she is young, she is beautiful, she is amiable as lovely, and one on whom a coronet would not be disgraced."

" Is she well born ? Surely, my Alfred would not wed beneath his rank and expectations."

" No, I would not. The woman whom I have chosen is a gentle, fascinating girl, an accomplished gentlewoman."

" Enough. I am sure she is all that you describe her. You, Alfred, are all that now remains to honour and support our tottering house ; to you we look as a representative who will not disgrace our ancient lineage, but hand

down to your posterity a name untarnished and unsullied. Your sisters have one by one been taken from us by the hand of death, and you, our youngest and most cherished hope, must not for selfish reasons forget your duty to us;— we will not be severe; give us but a daughter worthy to be such, and we will be content. She is young, you say?”

“ Scarcely as old as I am myself.”

“ And fair ?”

“ Transcendently.”

“ Her name ?”

“ Alice Beauclerk.”

The scream of agony which burst from the Marchioness's lips as she heard the declaration of her son, penetrated to his very soul; he rushed towards her, he caught her in his arms, he bathed her temples, and he strove by all the means within his power to recall her from the swoon into which she had fallen. When his exertions had been attended with success, and when she had partially recovered, a burst of hysterical sobs succeeded, which threatened to

require the aid of other assistance besides his own. But she would not let him leave her; she implored him to remain with her, and permit her to recover without the intrusion of any other person. At last she spoke :—

“ Alfred, I adjure thee by the love you profess to bear for me, to tell me where you met that girl whose name had well nigh maddened me.”

“ In Ireland, at the house of Mansfield’s uncle.”

“ Is she there now ?”

“ No, she has been removed from thence.”

“ And, unhappy boy, hast thou made a fool of thyself, and promised marriage ?”

“ Promised marriage ! Why, mother, I besought, I implored, I was nearly frantic at the refusals which I met; but I have at length prevailed, her scruples are overcome, and she has in mercy granted hope. But, mother, you know her, you know her parents; tell me of them, and I will bless you.”

“ Tell you of them ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! Fool, dolt, idiot, begone ! you are no son of mine,

when you can boast of courting infamy and disgrace.”

“Mother, I defy you to say that infamy and disgrace are coupled with the name of Alice Beauclerk. Yes, I defy you; if you know aught of those who gave her birth, you may speak; but of her, to say an irreverent word were treason.”

“I may speak of those who gave her birth, may I? Ah, Alfred! if you knew them you would curse them.”

“Never, never; as the parents of my Alice, my adored Alice, I would care for them, love them, and protect them, were they the veriest wretches that ever breathed. They may have wronged her, they may have forsaken her, but they cannot disgrace her.”

“Alfred, of Alice I know nothing; I want or wish to know nothing; but of her mother I know much, too much, Alfred, for my earthly or eternal peace.”

“Mother, you shock me. What can Alice Beauclerk be to you, or her miserable mother,

that thus they stir up such emotions? Forget her, mother, if you can; forgive her; but receive her lovely and innocent child as a daughter, for the sake of Alfred."

"Never, as I am a living woman; never! I hate her, I loathe her; and, Alfred, if you wed her, I will hate you too."

"For shame, mother; for shame! Your passions outrage decency. I blush to hear such words as those you utter, and fain would hope 'twas fancy that deluded me. If you cast me off, mother, I will be grieved—I will be pained—but I will marry Alice Beauclerk."

"If so, Alfred, a mother's bitterest curse shall rest for ever on you. Mark me well, I am a woman that can do a daring and a dreadful deed. Alfred, remember, I can be revenged!"

"Mother, your displeasure will be revenge enough for me. If I erred, I implore your pardon; but if you would assign a cause for your vindictive feelings against my Alice, I might give ear unto your counsels."

"A mother's wishes should suffice you;

added to them shall be a father's peremptory commands; disobey them, Alfred, if you dare!"

"It is useless to argue with you, mother; you are too intemperate at present; I shall go, and leave you to yourself. Ere we again meet, your mind must undergo a change. Farewell, mother!"

"Farewell, Alfred; but remember, that as soon as duty vanishes, maternal love is likewise gone. Beware of Alice Beauclerk and a mother's curse!"

Lord Portland rushed from the room, and leaving orders with his servant to expedite his travelling arrangements, and follow him, was soon on his way to Harwich.

On his departure Lady Cornwall sat mute and powerless, unable to rouse herself from the shock which she had so unexpectedly received. At last she seemed awakening from the intense oppression which had benumbed her faculties, and sounding a silver call which lay upon the table, it was answered by a Lilliputian page, who, superbly dressed, waited in the ante-room.

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“Has Lord Portland left the house?”

“He has, my lady.”

“Does he return?”

“No, your Ladyship, he does not: De Cloux follows to Harwich by the mail with the baggage.”

“Here, take this note, and have it sent immediately to Lady Arlingham’s; let the messenger tarry till he receives an answer. Haste, away!”

The beautiful child vanished, and Lady Cornwall was again alone. She rose from the ottoman on which she had been seated, and pacing about the apartment, seemed struggling hard to suppress the contending emotions which warred within her breast. Anon she muttered to herself:—

“Alice Beauclerk Portland’s wife! It must not be. No, were I to move heaven and hell I would prevent that. Alice—offscouring of my house—wedded to—to him for whom I have staked my hopes of heaven. No, no, Maude, you shall not do so!—Portland shall be saved—

so shall she! He shall marry to aggrandize my name, to swell the measure of my power. No nameless, houseless wanderer shall call me mother; what shall I say? No taint of birth shall blot my stainless 'scutcheon. 'Sans tache et sans reproche,' shall be the motto of my descendants; for as it has been, so shall it be. Would I could see the girl! I wonder is she like her mother! Mother, what a mockery in that title! What now, Endymion?"

"An answer, may it please your Ladyship, from the Countess of Arlingham."

"So soon? Ha! she too trembles. You may go, Endymion."

The billet was torn open, read, and flung upon the table, and the Marchioness again turned to pursue her wanderings and ruminations. Again was the door unclosed, and a female figure entered whose hurried step and flurried manner denoted the presence of a mind but ill at ease.

She was tall and fair, and though less of

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studied grace was visible in her appearance than in that of the Marchioness, there was more of natural elegance and personal fascinations. She was younger too, by ten or a dozen years at the very least; and the air of humility and terror with which she received the salutations of Lady Cornwall evinced respect, almost bordering on fear, or it might be aversion.

“ Adelaide, you are welcome; I was impatient for your coming.”

“ I was on my way from —— square when your note arrived. What sudden cause is there for your manifest alarm, Maude?”

“ What cause for my alarm? Why, Adelaide, the same that there should be for yours. Do you know that Portland wants to marry?”

“ Well, dearest Maude, why should his doing so excite such perturbation? Surely, 'tis but the fulfilment of your wishes and expectations?”

“ I know it, but to whom, think you, has he pledged himself?”

“ Perhaps the Lady Leonora Saville?”

“Wrong, Adelaide; you could never guess the terrible reality. His chosen love is Alice Beauclerk.”

“Powers of mercy, save me and defend me!” shrieked the Countess. “Maude, for the sake of heaven tell me that you jest,—unsay those awful words of deadliest import, and bring me back to life.”

“True, most true, is what I have declared, Adelaide. Within an hour, within this very room, I heard the declaration.”

“From whom?” gasped in mental agony the Countess.

“From Portland’s very lips I had it.”

“Then, gracious heavens, it is true; and Maude, Maude, our sin is tenfold doubled on our heads.”

“No, Adelaide, not yet. I will save them from their ruin, I swear it!—but you must help me.”

“Show me but how I can, Maude.”

“I will. He is gone; he must not return until she is married; do you insure that event without delay.”

“It were better, Maude, to sacrifice ourselves, and speak the truth; that would be our surest, safest plan.”

“And blast ourselves for ever! Shame on your craven heart. I always dreaded this. Remember yourself, Adelaide; remember me; remember our solemn oath.”

“Too well do I remember all and every thing connected with our hateful bond. Too manifest are the dreadful circumstances in the transaction for me to strive or hope to banish them from my remembrance. They rise in awful testimony of my guilt, and press upon my heart with unrelenting weight. Maude, I can never die until my conscience has been purged of its enormities.”

“Cease your vain babbling, Adelaide Arlingham. Your would-be saint-like speeches find no credence with me; your repentance can be but an idle dream. Banish your folly, and attend to reason. Time presses on us; haste, and get the girl to town;—when here, we can arrange still further.”

“What shall I say to account for this to her?”

“Say what you please. Why, woman, you have grown a fool; you once were shrewd and apt at a device; summon up your talent of invention, and frame some ready lie.”

“I will try, Maude, but at present I am confused and addled. My brain appears on fire; for the wages of sin are heavy to be borne.”

“Rouse yourself, Adelaide; this peril passed, all will be well. Portland will forget this love-scheme; he will marry Lady Leonora, and then, Adelaide, you may become a Methodist, or sainted Missionary, if you please it.”

CHAPTER XV.

“MISS BEAUCLERK, permit me to introduce Sir Leopold Lindorf—Sir Leopold Lindorf, Miss Beauclerk.” So said Mr. Dudley, as he presented Alice to his new acquaintance, Sir Leopold. Alice bowed to the Baronet, and resumed her occupation of reading, which his entrance had for a moment interrupted.

Sir Leopold was a short, thick, pompous man, about forty years old, with light blue eyes, pock-marked rosy countenance, white teeth, and an admirably well-made auburn wig, of most luxuriant and glossy proportions. He was well dressed, took snuff, and had a ring, with the Lindorf arms engraved upon it, on the little finger of his right hand. He was fortunate in

possessing an excellent opinion of himself, and on every possible opportunity took particular care to let every one know the respectability, and unblemished pedigree of the Lindorf family. He was possessed of a considerable property, part of which lay in Ireland, and as he had been obliged to visit it, had been favoured by an introduction from his friend Lady Cornwall, through Lady Arlingham, to Mr. Dudley, whose house lay within a few miles of Lindorf Court.

The elegance and dignity of Alice seemed to make a most favourable impression upon the Baronet, who, immediately upon his introduction to her, approached her, and addressed her with the most condescending affability. Her soft and feminine manner, seen to great advantage by the contrast with the three Dudleys, made its way to Sir Leopold's heart; and before the first day of his acquaintance with her had passed, he had requested Mr. Dudley to inform him what relationship existed between him and Miss Beauclerk. Mr. Dudley instantly, with

warmth, protested that he was not in the most distant way connected with the young lady, whom he had from motives of benevolence permitted to reside in his house. Sir Leopold's admiration instantly became subdued, and Alice fell considerably from the place which she a few moments before held in his estimation.

As the circumstance did not appear of any consequence in the eyes of Alice, she was careless and unmindful of the change in the Baronet's manner towards her on the ensuing days of his stay at Dudley Grove, and pursued her avocations of working or reading, glad that he had transferred his prosy compliments and speeches to Miss Charity Dudley, whose florid face and plump feather-bed figure made her no unequal likeness to Sir Leopold himself.

He was honoured by a minute and circumstantial account of Mr. Dudley's plans, projections, and improvements, until he evidently showed his dislike of the never-ending theme; and at the end of the week began to talk of his excessive gratitude for the attentions which he

had been honoured with, and which he would remember as long as he lived, with an intimation of his intention of soon bidding his friends farewell, and being obliged to be in London at an appointed time.

These declarations gave the death-blow to the hopes and expectations of Mr. Dudley's youngest darling, who had begun to plume herself upon the prospect of one day or other becoming Lady Lindorf. Hints were thrown out by the sagacious young lady of her admiration of Lindorf Court, and its charming master; her wish to spend at least half the year in London, her friendship and intimacy with many great people there, and, though last, not least, her expectations from the bounty of her uncle Cosby Cormick—the great Mr. Cormick, of tripe and cow-heel memory. All would not do; Sir Leopold was so excessively dull, or stupid, or deaf, that he would neither see, hear, nor understand; and Charity, in all the affliction of a thirty-fifth maiden birth-day, saw the extinction

of her hopes of becoming the wife of one, and the mother of a race of baronets.

“Letters, letters, heaps of letters,” said Mr. Dudley, as Patrick one morning entered at breakfast-hour with the post-bag, which he handed to his master. “One, two, three for you, Sir Leopold; one, two, for myself; one for Miss Beauclerk, I declare, from Lady Arlingham; and one for Miss Charity Dudley; and there ends all.”

“Do you know Lady Arlingham, Miss Beauclerk?” inquired Sir Leopold, with an astonished air.

“I cannot exactly say I am acquainted with her, Sir Leopold, although I have the honour of being her ward,” replied Alice.

“Her ward—Lady Arlingham’s ward? Astonishing! surprising! Why, Mr. Dudley, you did not mention that to me.”

“Why, I absolutely forgot the circumstance, Sir Leopold; but, on consideration, I believe Miss Beauclerk is a ward of her Ladyship’s.”

“ I entreat your pardon, Miss Beauclerk, for not paying you more attention than I have done during our acquaintance ; but, believe me, had I known of your connexion with my friend Lady Arlingham, I should have been most happy to have cultivated an intimacy with you,” said Sir Leopold, with a most pompous and consequential voice and manner.

“ I assure you, Sir Leopold,” answered Alice, with a bow to the Baronet, “ I should be most truly sorry you would grieve for a circumstance which cannot possibly be of the slightest consequence to me.” As she spoke she withdrew from the breakfast-table to a window, to open and read her letter, which ran thus :—

——— Square, London,

September 18th.

My dear Miss Beauclerk,

I trust to hear that you are well, and happy in the residence which I have selected for you. I believe Mr. Dudley to be a valuable and truly worthy person, and I have at all times

heard a favourable account of his lady and daughters, whom, I hope, have studiously endeavoured to make you comfortable.

Surely, my dear young friend, you do not allow grief for our mutually beloved friend to prey upon your health and spirits, which, I rather think, have been at all times delicate. As I shall not be completely satisfied about you until I see you, I entreat that you will give me the pleasure of your company for some time, in order that change of scene, and the society of friends who are interested for you, may restore you to yourself again. I will not hear of any excuse, and use my right of guardianship in declaring that my wishes for your presence in London must be immediately complied with.

Mr. Dudley will be kind enough to arrange your journey; if you have a servant, she will be protection sufficient for you, as a messenger and confidential person shall await your landing at whatever place you sail to. You will be kind enough to write immediately to me, and say when I may expect to see you. London offers,

at present, but little inducement to a stranger, as it is empty, and deserted by the gay world. Business has detained me here against my inclination, but I will endeavour to render your visit as agreeable as circumstances will permit.

I remain,

My dear Miss Beauclerk,

Most faithfully yours,

ADELAIDE ARLINGHAM.

Alice could scarcely believe the truth of such an unexpected event as an invitation from Lady Arlingham. She read and re-read the letter, and was lost in wonder why such a change should have taken place in the sentiments of that lady towards her. The marked interest which was so suddenly evinced to her was widely different from the cold and calculating tenor of her ladyship's former epistles, and she in vain sought a solution for the mystery; but as she never could have imagined the reality, she was unable even to guess at it, and in the innocence of her heart laid it to the score of affection to

the memory of Mrs. Beauclerk, and retired to answer with thankfulness the welcome prospect of a removal from Dudley Grove.

Then came the pleasing task of writing to her invaluable friend, Mrs. O'Grady, and thanking her for her kind hospitality, so long extended towards Mathews, whom she was now enabled to receive back again into her service, which she considered not the least part of Lady Arlingham's politeness and friendship. When she had completed those necessary preliminaries, she recollected that it was incumbent on her to declare to Mr. Dudley her intended separation from him, and her projected departure from his house.

She found him, rule in hand, measuring the length and breadth of some newly-devised machinery, and so busily engaged that at first he scarcely minded her intimation of wishing to speak to him. However, on hearing Lady Arlingham's name mentioned as a principal in the subject, he vouchsafed to fold up his two-foot rule, deposit it in his waistcoat-pocket, and

seat himself on a wooden box wherein the articles which had taken up his attention had been packed.

“What ails you now, Alley?”

“I have come, Mr. Dudley, to return you my thanks for your kindness to me during my residence here, and likewise to tell you that I intend leaving Dudley Grove in a few days.”

“Leaving Dudley Grove! I think you will be sorry for that. How long will you stay away? for it bothers the house, having people going backwards and forwards.”

“I do not intend to intrude upon you, Mr. Dudley, again.”

“What the devil do you mean, girl?”

“Only that I expect I shall never again be a tax upon your hospitality, sir.”

“Whose doing is this nice kettle of fish?”

“Lady Arlingham’s, sir.”

“That is another business; but where are you going?”

“To Lady Arlingham’s house, in London.”

“ The devil you are ! Why, that is a new figary.”

“ True it is, notwithstanding, sir ; and Lady Arlingham requests that you will have the necessary arrangements made respecting my departure.”

“ Who is to go with you, my dear ?”

“ My own servant ; and Lady Arlingham provides for my reception at the other side.”

“ Delighted to hear it, 'pon my honour ! extravagantly glad of your good fortune, though desperately sorry to lose you ! The girls will miss you amazingly.”

“ I should think not, sir ; however, I shall never cease to remember their conduct towards me.”

“ I am sure of that, my dearest Miss Beauclerk ; they are girls one never could forget. I am sure they will often think of you.”

“ What am I indebted to you, Mr. Dudley ?”

“ Why, a—why, my dear young friend, do not think of such an insult to me ; you owe me nothing.”

“ I beg your pardon, sir, I do, and shall insist upon having an account furnished to me.”

“ Never mind, Alley—I beg your pardon, Miss Beauclerk, I mean ; I shall always feel happy in having been able to be of use to you any way.”

“ I thank you, sir, but must insist upon having my wishes instantly complied with.”

“ Why, if so, you know, I must obey ; but I am to forward my account to Lady Arlingham—expect she will pay me.”

“ You are mistaken, sir ; I am as yet enabled defray my own expenses, and must be allowed to do so.”

“ My dear young lady, your will is my pleasure ; I shall make out the account, and hand it you to-morrow.”

“ Thank you, sir.” And Alice walked off from the discomfited mechanic, inwardly amused at his altered demeanour.

“ What’s this I hear, Miss Beauclerk, honey?” said Mrs. Dudley to Alice, when she had been

informed of her intended departure ; “ sure ’t isn’t thinking of going away you are from us.”

“ It is my intention, Mrs. Dudley, to do so; but, believe me, I will not forget your good-nature to me. Can I do any thing for you in London? I shall be most happy if you favour me with your commands.”

“ Thank you, honey; I have a few little commissions which I’ll be after asking you to execute for me. I want a couple of bottles of Harvey’s fish-sauce, and some ground Jamaica ginger; be sure you get them genuine, for the London people adulterate every thing.”

“ With pleasure I will get them, ma’am; but you have specified such small quantities, that I think it will be hardly worth your while to receive them.”

“ Oh, my dear, you ar’n’t up to trap ! I make six bottles of sauce out of one, because the drop I put in allows me to say, without an untruth, that ‘ there is some of Harvey’s genuine fish-sauce.’ Now, if you were to stay any time with

us, I'd engage to make a housekeeper of you. Sure, only I am at the head and tail of every thing, high and low, we would be ruined entirely long ago, with Mr. Dudley's inventions."

"Miss Beauclerk," said Miss Charity, "like a dear darling creature, send me some music. I doat on any thing new; and if you hear Lady Arlingham speaking about us, pray put it into her head to ask us to London. For my part, I would not have thought much of her asking one or two of us to go with you, when she knows we have been so kind and attentive to you."

Mr. Dudley at that moment opened the door, and, seeing Alice, exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Beauclerk! you are the very person I wanted to see; I had your account in my mind; so, as you wished for it, I made it out at once, instead of waiting until to-morrow."

Alice took it from Mr. Dudley, and, throwing her eye upon the amount, at once opened her purse and handed it to him.

"Oh, Miss Beauclerk! as you are leaving us, you will not have any objection to my keeping all this; for though you have been with us

but five weeks and one day, you know that generally when a quarter is entered into, it is paid for in full."

"I am aware of it, sir," replied Alice, "and expect you will take what you consider to be your right."

"Thank you, Miss Beauclerk; will you have the kindness to see that all is correct?"

"I am sure it is," was the reply; though, when Alice looked over the account, she was not a little surprised at the exorbitant charges which it contained:—

Miss Beauclerk, to Darby Dudley, Esq.—Dr.			
	£.	s.	d.
To expenses attendant on going for			
Miss Beauclerk, and bringing her			
to Dudley Grove	10	10	6½
To loss of time while away from			
home at harvest-time, &c. &c. &c.	10	0	0
To diet and lodging for one quarter,			
at the rate of 100 <i>l.</i> per annum	25	0	0
To washing, postage, &c.	3	0	0
To sundries	5	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£53	10	6½
	<hr/>		

Luckily for Alice, her funds allowed her to retain as much, after paying Mr. Dudley, as would take her to London. The sum which Lady Arlingham had sent her, on hearing of the death of Mrs. Beauclerk, was still untouched, and she hoped to be able to return it so; but the yearly bequest of Mrs. Beauclerk was too trifling to allow her to hope that she could manage without being compelled to accept the bounty of strangers. However, as her mind was more at ease since she had received Lady Arlingham's invitation, she banished depressing thoughts, and met the family at dinner-time, determined to be happy.

CHAPTER XVI.

“WHEN do you purpose leaving Ireland, Miss Beauclerk?” inquired Sir Leopold.

“The commencement of next week, I hope,” was the answer.

“If you would allow me the honour of escorting you, I would be most happy, as I intend journeying to London at that time myself.”

“I feel much obliged for your kindness, Sir Leopold; but as I expect to meet a person deputed by Lady Arlingham to attend me to London, on my landing, I think I will not give you any trouble.”

“I assure you, Miss Beauclerk, you greatly mistake me if you think I consider any attentions towards the fair sex trouble. Our family,

the Lindorfs, have always been most celebrated for their gallantry and devotion to the ladies. I will attend you, and feel happy at doing so."

Sir Leopold paused, drew up, bowed, and smiled, to exhibit his beautiful teeth. Alice returned the obeisance, and the matter was settled.

"Pray, Miss Beauclerk, did Lady Arlingham ever mention to you in her letters that I was a relative of hers?"

"Never, Sir Leopold; but her ladyship's letters are always short, and principally on business."

"Strange;—however, we are connected, and not very distantly, either: my grandmother's uncle's wife and Lady Arlingham's great grandfather's second wife were own first and second cousins; and likewise the Marchioness of Cornwall boasts of affinity to the Lindorfs of Lindhurst, who are closely related to the Lindorfs of Lindorf, whose representative I am not a little proud of acknowledging myself to be. You see, Miss Beauclerk, the Lindorfs have no trifling

allowance of old thick blood in their veins. We reckon a baronetcy in our family since the reign of William Rufus, who perhaps you do not know succeeded William the Conqueror, who was the first king of the Norman line in England."

Alice could not help smiling as she heard the pompous little man refresh her memory on the subject of English history; and as he imagined that the smile was indicative of delight at the novel information, he continued,

"My great great grandfather, Marmaduke Lindorf, married Margaret Taylor, of Pattypie Hall, who was daughter to a maid of honour to Queen Mary, wife of William, and daughter of James the Second, whose cause my ancestors espoused in defiance of the wrath of William and Mary, which fully accounts for the liberal principles manifested by the Lindorf family towards Roman Catholics. In short, were I to give you even the outline of our pedigree, it would take me at least a week to make you understand the marriages and intermarriages of our house with

the nobility of Great Britain. For instance: my grandmother, Dorothy Duddle, was niece and heiress of Sir Patrick O'Flannagan, by whom Flannagan's Folly, now Lindorf Court, came into our family. Do you understand me, Miss Beauclerk?"

"Perfectly, Sir Leopold. I am really astonished how your memory can retain the complicated alliances and relationships which you have been alluding to."

"Why, Miss Beauclerk, it is all habit. I scarcely ever read or think of any thing else. For my part, I think it better for a man to be acquainted with who he is and what he is, than to be wasting his time in nonsense and politics. If I had a child, the first thing he should be made to understand should be his pedigree; indeed, I have laid down in my mind a short rapid survey of the Lindorfs, capitally calculated to make a lasting impression on an infant mind."

"I dare say that such an undertaking has

given you a great deal of trouble, Sir Leopold."

"Why, yes; and particularly as I cannot say exactly whom the mother's family may be. I have thought of many, but am still undecided."

"By-the-bye, Sir Leopold," interrupted Mr. Dudley, "is the Cornwall family a wealthy one?"

"Very: old George, the fifth Marquis, married Theresa, fourth daughter of Sir Toby Trottem, an immensely wealthy East Indian, and by her got incalculable wealth for his children, along with a little Creole blood; hence the dark complexions of the Cornwalls."

"And pray, how are they connected with the Arlinghams?"

"Lady Cornwall's mother was aunt of Lady Arlingham's father; hence the intimacy between the two families, which has given rise to the scandal concerning both families in the fashionable world, of which the Marchioness and

Countess have been leaders, one for thirty, the other for twenty years."

"And pray, Sir Leopold, what is the scandal?" said Mr. Dudley, his eyes twinkling with awakened curiosity, as he drew his chair near to that of his guest, expecting a bit of gossip, which he dearly loved.

"Far be it from me, Mr. Dudley, (connected and related as I am to the two families), to spread abroad the tale of calumny once circulated in London; though from the exalted situation which they hold in the world, now lost to posterity." As Sir Leopold spoke he spread his fat hand across his fatter heart (or the spot where it should have been), in attestation of his determination to support the characters of his friends.

Mr. Dudley looked abashed, took a pinch of snuff from the golden box (heir-loom of the Lindorfs) which lay before the baronet, and pushed his chair a few paces away from his scrupulous and conscientious visitor. At last he said—

"Pray, Sir Leopold, as you know every

thing and every one, who is the Russian Ambassador, to whom Lord Portland is going?"

"Lord Pettigrew, an enormously rich man, though only lately risen in the world. His father was only one of the Union Lords, a person without pedigree. He has however a beautiful daughter, to whom the world of fashion say Lord Portland is to be married. His mother has insisted upon his becoming a diplomatist, in order to secure the hand of the Lady Leonora Saville, who has accompanied her father to St. Petersburg, whither Lord Portland has followed her.—Gracious me, Miss Beauclerk, what is the matter with you, you look deadly pale?"

"Only a violent head-ache, which the heat of the room has given me," said Alice, who had been attentively listening to the Baronet's harangue; her answer satisfied Sir Leopold, who continued—

"Perhaps you are not aware, Mr. Dudley, that Lord Portland is an only son. Lady Cornwall had four daughters. Lady Emma, and Lady Jemima, who both died early, one in her

tenth year and the other in her seventeenth week, both fine, promising children; carried off by scarletina, notwithstanding the care and unremitting attention of Sir Ronald Lapsly, the king's physician, and Doctor Seidlitz, the queen's apothecary. The Lady Barbara married Lord Bartington, eldest son of the Earl of Carlston, but has unfortunately become a *divorcée*. The youngest Lady Madelaine, is lately dead, having lived with every promise of health until her eight and twentieth year, when she was killed by a fall from her horse, when riding in the park with her father, who has never recovered the shock. Lord Portland is therefore their only child, and a most amiable and promising young man he is; I think he has a resemblance to the Lindorfs about his teeth, which are like mine, exceedingly good." Here Sir Leopold smiled, the better to exhibit his unblemished masticators, which, with the aid of one or two from a dentist, and a constant use of the most approved tooth powder, appeared a pecu-

liar advantage in his thick apoplectic looking head.

Miss Charity, who had been sitting opposite to Sir Leopold, swallowing every word which he had been delivering, took the opportunity of saying—

“ Now that you mention it, Sir Leopold, I do see a striking resemblance in you to our friend Lord Portland. Your air and manner is exactly his; only I think your smile more playful, and your nose more aquiline.”

The baronet bowed, delighted at the compliment, and Alice raised her head from a book which she had listlessly taken up, to endeavour to make out the (to her) invisible likeness; but as that was impossible, she concluded that in the eyes of Charity only, was the resemblance apparent.

The worthy knight of the aquiline nose being in a humour for talking, and showing off his acquaintance with the Peerage, turned to Alice and said—

“ Will you allow me to ask, as a friend, my dear Miss Beauclerk, to what branch of the Beauclerk family you are connected, for I know almost every one of the family well ?”

Alice coloured, and answered that she did not know.

“ Not know ! why pardon me for saying that it is a shame for you to be ignorant of your own family. Many is the one who would be proud could they but call themselves by the noble and illustrious name of Beauclerk, a name deservedly respected and exalted. If you just tell me what you do know, I promise to find out the rest, and without loss of time. I have the honour of claiming kindred myself to the Beauclerks ; for the seventh Lindorf baronet was married to Agnes Freemantle, the daughter of Henry Freemantle and his wife Dorcas Beauclerk ; you see how high we Lindorfs always have kept.”

Sir Leopold looked round in triumph as he ended his discourse, to see the effect which it had produced upon his auditors. To his dismay he found that Mr. and Mrs. Dudley had both

fallen asleep, and were nodding *vis à vis* most socially and comfortably. The two elder Misses Dudley had vanished, Alice was reading, and Charity, his sole remaining listener, was un sentimentally yawning to the imminent hazard of dislocating her well-fed, chubby chops.

The baronet of many quarterings rose, lit a chamber candle, (for it was bed-time,) and with an offended nod to his slighted admirer, walked off to bed.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALICE received a most kind and affectionate letter from Mrs. O'Grady, in answer to her summons for Mathews. She expressed herself most happy at the change which had taken place in her prospects, and entreated her to remember that Kneuchtnanoon, dreary as it was, would always contain hearts anxious for her welfare, and a warm and sincere welcome should she need to return to it. Mr. O'Grady, anxious to bid her farewell, would accompany Mathews to the harbour from whence she was to sail, and gladden his old eyes once again by seeing her. The old lady concluded with many warm and heart-felt wishes for the preservation of her

young friend, in the maze of life which she was about to enter, and prayed that the judgment and strength of understanding which she had through her short life evinced, might be still granted, and increased to her.

Alice laid the kind and warning epistle in a safe place, as a record of the worth of her only friends in Ireland; she might with truth have added (as at the time she thought) her only true friends (save one) in the world. Her preparations did not take up much time, or give her much trouble, as she had many trunks which she had never opened while enduring her martyrdom at Dudley Grove. However, if she had had weeks of labour before her, they would have been as nothing to her, for the three young ladies, and their really good natured mother, offered their services incessantly, and teased Alice as much by their importunities, as they had before hurt her by their gross neglect and apparent rudeness. The only persons in the establishment who sincerely regretted the prospect of her departure, were Peg and Patrick,

whose real feelings and sentiments were known to her through the accommodating chinks which gave to Alice's apartment the conversations of the lower regions in all their unadulterated simplicity. The sorrow of Mrs. Dudley, though in some measure genuine, was so selfish, that Alice was assured the loss of her money was the sure source of the tribulation which she gave vent to while ordering and superintending the extra delicacies for the baronet's appetite. Her affliction for his ingratitude to her darling Charity too, was a theme which not even the presence of his valet could suppress, and Alice was constantly shocked by the rude and presuming jests which those lamentations elicited from the gentleman's gentleman, even in the hearing of the unsophisticated mistress of the house.

Alice had not heard from Lord Portland after his departure, in consequence of her entreaties that he should remain silent, and not run the risk of having their attachment brought to light during his absence. He had, though with extreme reluctance, yielded to her wishes while

journeying to London, and from thence to Harwich, but when there, and on the eve of embarking, he could not repress his inclinations for once to disobey her, and seized the last opportunity which he would have ere he quitted his native land, to forward a small parcel by a confidential friend to her.

She had been engaged in reading for the thousandth time the only memorial which she possessed of him, save her own heart, when a packet was brought to her room by Charity Dudley, who, on handing it to her, seated herself with a determination to await the inspection of its contents. But Alice, who did not choose to gratify the young lady's curiosity at the expense of her own feelings, quietly put it away, as if already aware of what was within it; but Charity was not to be put off so easily.

“ Who is that parcel from, dear Miss Beauclerk ?”

“ I am sorry I cannot inform you, Miss Dudley.”

“ Oh, then you know all about it ?”

“ I rather think I do.”

“ Well now that is odd, because when Papa brought it in, he showed it to us, and we were all trying to guess who had sent it. Sir Leopold examined it particularly. But as we had not a book of heraldry in the house he could not make out the crest, though generally so sharp about those things. He bid me say he would thank you for the seal when you had opened the parcel, as he would keep it in order to make it out.”

“ I am sorry, Miss Dudley, I cannot oblige you or Sir Leopold, for as the concern is a private one, I cannot take upon myself to allow any one the liberty of prying into concerns which do not belong to them.”

“ Shall I say so to Sir Leopold ?”

“ You may if you choose ; for such is my determination.”

Charity bridled up, and looked “ unutterable things” at Alice, who did not seem to notice her, but permitted her to walk off as ignorant as when

she came, and when she was to herself, fastened the door, and opened the mysterious packet. Its contents were a portrait, and a letter.

A letter from the donor of the portrait could not but be received with gladness, and Alice was obliged to read it contrary to her declarations and *resolves*.

“ I send to my Alice a likeness of her Alfred. May she accept it with as fervent a love as it is sent with. It was designed to be a gift to one whom maternal fondness had hoped to invest with the affections of a being who loves but you ; and surely Alice for this cause, you will not scorn it. As you look upon it, remember our vows now registered in heaven, and think of him who needs no semblance of you but that which is for ever stamped upon his heart. I crave your pardon for this infringement upon your commands, and trust when you behold the image of the transgressor, you will pardon the transgression. In a few hours I shall bid adieu to Britain ; may my return to its blessed

shores be as full of hope as is my departure. May no evil tidings reach me, or await me, to mar the bright prospect of the future, which now, in 'my mind's eye,' I see before us.

"I will not write again; secure in the confidence of your pledged faith I will leave you; and, Alice, all I ask is, that absence may not blight or blast thy constancy to Alfred."

"May you, Alfred, be as true to Alice as time shall find her to you," was the mental ejaculation of Alice, as she kissed the almost speaking likeness of the Earl, and gazed intently on its fascinating lineaments. Here, then, was a treasured store of happiness, which she could gladden her heart by viewing and thinking upon for ever. Here was a consolation to which she could resort when the cold and unfeeling world would scorn, or be unmindful of her; and here was a guard upon her actions, which would prevent the voice of calumny from being able to cast the breath of slander upon her during her separation from the beloved original, whose

right to judge of her, she now had neither power nor inclination to question. She placed it with care amongst the few articles of value which she possessed, and with the most perfect and unalloyed happiness irradiating her countenance, descended to meet and parry the questions and obtrusive curiosity of Sir Leopold, concerning the enigmatical crest which had aroused his astonishment and surprise as one totally unknown to him.

“And you will not tell me, Miss Beauclerk, whose it is?”

“Indeed, Sir Leopold, I cannot.”

“Well, now, I think it is unkind of you. It is either a lion, or a leopard, or a tiger, or some such animal couchant on a field. Really, now, I cannot make out what sort of a field it is. The Brablings’ crest is a tiger couchant, the Dunlevins’ is a hyena couchant, the Cornwalls’ is a——I forget what it is, but I know it is something couchant. Dear me, how stupid I am to forget the crest of my near connexions in this way; however, it is not theirs, I am certain,

that was on your parcel. The Lindorfs is a rat at bay ; here it is, you see, on my ring at one side, while on the other is our coat of arms. They are magnificently cut, as you may perceive, as also those two seals on my chain. Here, you see, is our crest surrounded with our motto, ‘To conquer or die,’ taken by my ancestor in the year 1094, in consequence of William the Second, hearing a rat scratching somewhere or other, and desiring him to destroy it, when, in endeavouring to do so, the floor gave way, and my brave progenitor was precipitated with considerable force to the cellars, which, in those barbarous times, were immediately beneath the sitting-rooms. He, however, soon made his appearance, with the animal struggling in the last agonies of death, and though much bruised, presented it on his knee to William Rufus, at the same time saying, ‘Here, may it please your Majesty, is the body of your enemy, destroyed by my hand. To conquer or die while fulfilling your desire is my bounden duty.’ The King smiled, as he

heard the loyal words of his adherent and subject, and, drawing his sword, he exclaimed, ‘Kneel down, valiant Lindorf.’ My ancestor immediately did as he was commanded. ‘Rise, Sir Lindorf,’ said he; and up rose my grandsire for ever after Sir Lindorf. ‘Remember,’ said the monarch, turning to his courtiers, ‘I create Sir Lindorf and his heirs male baronets for ever, with the motto ‘To conquer or die.’ Hence, Miss Beauclerk, our titles and crest.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE morning of Alice's departure rose brilliantly and without a cloud to mar the splendour of the September sun, which seemed to dispense its most invigorating rays, in order to make more cheerful her anticipations of future joys. The Dudleys all appeared sorry, and Charity, in reality, could not suppress her tears, as Mr Leopold's travelling chariot followed her mother's immense green coach to the door. Mr. Dudley, who was to accompany Alice, and see her on board, appeared to have forgotten the circumstance of his having brought her to his house in a dirty, wretched hackney carriage, without the least attention to her feelings; for his over-anxiety to pay her every civility in

his power denoted either the badness of his memory, or his hopes of being able to dispel any disagreeable impressions which might have still remained upon her mind.

The last box was packed into the carriage of Mr. Dudley, the last trunk was fixed upon it, and the last "Good byes" were said, and off rattled the ponderous machine, followed closely by Sir Leopold and his servant. The drive to the sea-port town was but a short one; and Alice, on alighting at the hotel at which they were to remain until the following morning, was warmly welcomed and embraced by Mr. O'Grady and Mathews, who had been waiting their arrival with impatience.

The good and worthy man at once saw that matters were altered with Mr. Dudley. His marked attention and tiresome civilities recalled to his mind the difference of the case, when Alice was about to become an inmate of his dwelling, and much as he disliked the man, he could not but feel amused at it. Many were the kind and affectionate messages which Alice

received from his wife, and many were the sincere proffers of friendship which he himself spoke, not merely from the mouth, but from the heart too.

“I am sure, Alice,” he said, “that I need not impress upon your mind the propriety of the part which you have acted with respect to Lord Portland. You see even now the advantage of entering the world unshackled by engagements, which might become a burthen and restraint hereafter upon both you and him. You seem, my dear Alice, surprised at my knowing matters which you believed secret; but you must not be displeased at it, for Lord Portland but confided in me to endeavour to gain me to his side, in order to subvert your decision against him.”

“Mr. O’Grady, kind and dear friend, I suspected that you were acquainted with the business; for Lord Portland promised to be led by you, though in the end he did not follow your counsels.”

“He did, Alice, he did. I only advised a restraint for the present upon his inclinations,

which, Alice, I will allow I thought most natural; and I know he did not attempt to speak to you again upon the subject while you were at my house, for he told me so."

"But, Mr. O'Grady, he wrote to me."

"Did you answer his letter?"

"No, I did not."

"Right, still right, Alice; you will be yet rewarded for this."

"But"——

"But what, Alice? Speak freely, my child, to me, for as such I love you. Has he again written?"

"Yes, Mr. O'Grady, and he has come, too, to Dudley Grove."

"Did you see him?"

"I did, for I could not help myself; he had been ill."

"Well, and I suppose he implored and entreated more than ever, and you consented to his entreaties?"

"I did."

“Well, my child, I almost expected this; but, as it cannot now be helped, I will not blame you; but I am sorry for it. I do not like engagements without the sanction of older and wiser heads; but I can scarcely think you wrong, situated as you unhappily have been. Of your constancy I have no doubt, but, my child, men are not as faithful sometimes as they profess to be.”

“Surely, my dearest friend, you cannot think so badly of Lord Portland as to doubt him?”

“Alice, I only speak of men collectively, not individually. I admire Lord Portland, I think well of him, but he may prove inconstant. You know the song that commences with

‘ Though love is warm awhile,’

do you not, Alice? It is a beautiful and a true one. But, since matters are as you state them, I implore you will not write, or hold any intercourse with him until his return. If when he does, he gains the approval of his parents, then, dearest Alice, be Lady Portland at once;

and mind, you must come to Kneuchtnanoon, and rejoice its dreary bogs once with a wedding."

Alice tried to smile, but it was an ineffectual attempt. The conversation had left a damp upon her spirits, that not all the wit and pleasantry of Mr. O'Grady, or the peculiarities of her other companions, could dispel during the remainder of the evening.

At an early hour on the succeeding morning Alice was on board. Mr. O'Grady and Mr. Dudley staid to the last moment with her, and when the word of command was given to put the vessel under weigh, they separated from her, one with unaffected sorrow, the other with set speeches of compliment and nonsense.

"Extravagantly sorry to part with you, my dearest Miss Beauclerk. Believe me, I have not words to express my very sincere affliction, and I entreat that if at any time, I can be of use to you in any way, that you will let me know, and I shall immediately exert myself to accede to your wishes whatever they may be."

Before he had ceased speaking, the vessel

was crowding sail, and leaving him in the distance, shouting out his empty compliments to the winds.

Sir Leopold was excessively attentive to Alice until he found himself becoming a victim to the most horrible sea-sickness, which seized him as soon as the motion of the ship became apparent. His fiery red visage became deadly white, his auburn wig became awry, leaving a patch of his well-shorn head visible ; and, scarcely able to speak, he still did not forget the attribute of the Lindorfs, politeness to the ladies.

“ Miss Beauclerk, I do not feel well. Can I do any thing for you before I descend to my berth ? If I can, pray speak—for—the Lindorfs are martyrs to—I beg your pardon, Ma’am—we are martyrs to sea—” Here the Baronet turned from Alice, caught hold of the steward’s friendly arm, tottered to the top of the companion, was unable to proceed, and was taken body and bones between two able sailors, and

lost to the view of Alice, who very soon herself felt obliged to follow his example.

On landing, Lady Arlingham's carriage was in attendance to convey Alice up to town, much to the annoyance of Sir Leopold, who found her society exceedingly agreeable. However, he took care to keep up with her during her journey, and ensure at each stoppage a little conversation.

“ My dear Miss Beauclerk, I was near meeting with a dreadful accident just as you drove off from the hotel this morning. I had stepped into my carriage, and was just driving out of the yard, when an abominable waggon scraped by me, nearly upset me, and, would you believe it, completely obliterated the Lindorf arms from the panel. I am excessively annoyed about it, for unless people go round to the other side, they will never know my carriage, or imagine that a Lindorf would travel with the ancient arms of his family defaced.”

“ Had you not better, then, Sir Leopold,

remain here until the accident has been remedied?" said Alice, anxious to get rid of him and his family honours.

"I would not act so unlike a Lindorf as to desert a lady, Miss Beauclerk, and likewise those common painters, such as one would meet with here, could never understand the way a coat of arms such as mine should be executed."

"Well, how do you intend to manage, Sir Leopold?"

"Why, I reckon upon its being dusk when we arrive at the West-end, so, most probably, my friends will not observe the manner of my entrance; seeing Lady Arlingham's own carriage and servants, will cause them to consider me as belonging to her train; and for once a Lindorf must be satisfied with appearing as a retainer to his own relations."

"Pray, Sir Leopold, do not come out of your way for me. I shall be perfectly content with the attendance of Lady Arlingham's servants, to whose care I have been entrusted."

"You will not put me out of my way, I

assure you, Miss Beauclerk, though if you did I should not think it a very great hardship. My house adjoins Lady Arlingham's, and I trust I shall often have the felicity of seeing you in it with Lady Arlingham, who is kind enough to do the honours of my mansion for me, during the absence of a Lady Lindorf."

CHAPTER XVIII.

“MAUDE, she is beautiful!” exclaimed Lady Arlingham to her friend Lady Cornwall, on the morning after Alice’s arrival.

“I judged so, Adelaide, for Portland is not easily pleased with respect to beauty. When did she come?”

“But last evening, and I have not to-day seen her, I was so anxious to tell you all about her. If she is as lovely by the trying light of day as she seemed to me by that of lamps, we have but a poor chance of succeeding with her lover.”

“You are wrong, decidedly wrong, Adelaide. Our chance is better through her loveliness. She will be surrounded by legions of admirers,

and may, in the pride of viewing so many lovers at her feet, forget her first love."

"Never. If ever truth existed in a woman, it is depicted on Alice Beauclerk's countenance. She is strikingly like to her father."

"Indeed! I long to see her. When shall I go?"

"To-morrow were better than to-day. Our zealous friend and would-be relative, Sir Leopold, has come to town; he travelled with Alice, whom he met at Dudley's."

"Simpleton as he is, his wealth might tempt the girl. What would you say to such a scheme? Does he admire her?"

"I know not, for I have not seen him. Markham tells me that she heard from Davies that the Baronet never lost sight of the carriage in which she was. But it would be a crying sin to wed her to him."

"Nonsense, Adelaide, I would not pity her to get him, his pedigree, and his thirty thousand per annum."

"You have not seen her though, Maude.

Were she my child, I would be proud of her. Would that she were !”

“ I wish she were, from my very soul, Adelaide. What misery would have been spared us both !”

“ And iniquity too, Maude !”

“ Yes, but we cannot help it now. Better is it that we should try to forget it, Adelaide, if we could.”

“ If—yes, if we could ; but with such living proofs before us, how can we ?”

“ Do as I do—laugh at conscience, and repel thought. Were I to ponder on the matter as you do, I would not be here to tell it.”

“ Where would you be, Maude ?”

“ In my grave—a clod of the valley. I could not brook repentance, but would rush upon futurity. I would at least be rid of that fear which rests as a canker on your heart.”

“ But your immortal soul ! where would that be ?”

“ Heaven knows. It matters not !”

“ You will call me Methodist, canting

hypocrite, and fool; but, Maude, a day of reckoning must come, and for the deeds done in the mortal flesh, the immortal spirit will be answerable."

"Be it so; at least I shall not have more to account for than you, Adelaide. Query, shall I have as much?"

"I trust not, from my soul; but pray that ere we both are summoned to the heavenly tribunal, we may be found purified and cleansed from the leper of our souls."

"Time enough for that even yet, Adelaide; we are not very old."

"The young, Maude, may die; the old must."

"Well, Adelaide, when Portland marries Lady Leonora Saville, I will think of what you say."

"Think of it ere that event arrives, for I fear much 'tis but a visionary hope."

"It shall not be so. I will accomplish my purpose. Alice shall be married ere the mission is accomplished, and then Leonora may be

better thought of by him than she is. She is not worthy of him, but her fortune is. Her princely revenues will repair the breaches which time and our extravagance have caused in his. He knows my wishes for his marriage, and was almost yielding to my entreaties when Alice came across him to blight my hopes."

"I must leave you now, Maude. Farewell! when next we meet, 'Alice Beauclerk the Forsaken' will be before us. Do you not dread the interview? Will no warm, tender feelings intrude to risk discovery? Will no spontaneous throbbing of your heart betray you? Will you look calmly upon her beauties and her innocence, and not be tempted to fall upon her neck, and say, She is my own?"

"Not a whit, Adelaide; not the least danger of my giving way to such follies. Maude Cornwall has passed ordeals more trying than this, and has she blenched? You best can answer that question."

"I can, and I am satisfied. But when I think that if Alice and Portland, under other

circumstances, were to be attached (and how proudly would we grant our joint consents to their union !) the thought well nigh maddens me."

"More fool you, Adelaide !"

"Yes, Maude, I know it. But once again, my friend, farewell !"

Lady Arlingham left the boudoir of her friend, entered her carriage, which was in waiting, and was driven to her own house.

"Is Miss Beauclerk up yet?" said the Countess to her woman, as she entered her dressing-room.

"Yes, my Lady."

"Where is she, Markham ?"

"In the music-room, my Lady, playing on the harp."

"Has she seen any one to-day ?"

"Sir Leopold Lindorf, who would not be refused, my Lady."

"Ha ! Any letters ?"

"Two Irish ones for Miss Beauclerk, and those on your desk for your Ladyship."

“By the bye, Markham, write to Mr. Dudley, as if from me, and beg of him to forward Miss Beauclerk’s letters which may arrive at Dudley Grove, under cover to me;—you may add, it is the young lady’s wish.”

“I will, my Lady. Will your Ladyship change your dress now?”

“No, I shall not remain within.”

Lady Arlingham approached the music room, but was fascinated at the entrance by the rich thrilling notes which Alice poured forth as she warbled a simple ballad. Tears stood in the Countess’s eyes as she ended; and as the touching melody died away in lengthened cadences, she was obliged to return to her room, in order to dispel the traces of agitation which were visible on her countenance. When recovered, she proceeded once again to join Alice, whom she found engaged in turning over some of the piles of music which lay scattered about. Her face was instantly lighted up with pleasure, as she perceived the entrance of her noble and elegant hostess, whose warm welcome on the

preceding night had awakened her affection and gratitude ; so healing had it been to her wounded spirits, when compared to the rude and inhospitable one which had greeted her on her arrival at Dudley Grove.

The Countess, whose stature exceeded that of middle height, was well calculated to attach unto her a young and inexperienced girl as Alice. Her sweet and conciliatory manner, her striking beauty, her low soft voice,—all formed a combination which it was difficult to withstand, and her young guest found it impossible to do so. Her eyes of rich and dazzling blue, her fair transparent skin, unspoiled by artificial colouring, and her fine and beautifully moulded form, evinced that in the hey-day of youth she must have been a being of surpassing loveliness. Her age might have been forty-five, or perhaps a year or two under or beyond it ; but her days must have passed lightly over her, for not a wrinkle or trace of sorrow marred the prime of her womanhood.

Her dwelling, magnificent, and suited to her

rank, breathed the essence of luxury; every thing around her was like herself, the finest and most beautiful of its kind. Her pure and matchless taste was every where evident; and she moved, the priestess of a temple, whose splendour was unequalled and unrivalled.

As she met Alice, she bent and kissed her cheek, and tenderly inquired if she had recovered from her fatigue. Her scrutinizing glance aroused the colour to the cheek of Alice, whose looks did not disappoint the expectations of the Countess, or seem less lovely than on their first meeting.

“ You shall not venture out to-day, Miss Beauclerk,” she said; “ you do not seem strong, and I must take care of you for my poor friend’s sake.”

Alice’s changing countenance showed the emotions which this allusion to Mrs. Beauclerk had stirred up, and she was unable to speak or answer.

“ Did Mrs. Beauclerk often speak of me to

you, Alice? — for so you must let me call you.”

“ I cannot call to my remembrance ever hearing my beloved aunt speak of you ; but her last sentiments, recorded in her will, denote her feelings for you to be those of unaltered friendship and affection.”

“ I cannot account for her silence about her friends in London ; we all thought she slighted us and forgot us, for the members of her husband’s family ; but her having entrusted me with the guardianship of you shows that she still remembered me.”

“ Yes, Lady Arlingham ; and she likewise added that you would know her reasons for entrusting the ‘ forsaken’ Alice to your care.”

The Countess turned from Alice, as if to arrange a vase of flowers which lay upon a table by her side, but in reality to conceal her confusion and mantling colour as she heard the words of Alice. At last she resumed her former position, and said,

“ Mrs. Beauclerk was right, perfectly right, when she said I would know the reason of my being thus chosen. It is a long story, and I cannot now explain it to you. The errors of a friend must be at all times a painful subject and recollection.”

Alice felt pained and hurt, she knew not why; but the words of Lady Arlingham had seemed to include her remembrance of the transgressions of either Mrs. Beauclerk or some one connected with her; so Alice did not reply. Some time after, however, the discourse of the Countess became as it was at first, and the unpleasant allusion seemed to be forgotten.

Lady Arlingham would not allow Alice to venture out during that day, and with many apologies took leave of her for some hours, in order to fulfil some engagements of importance; so that she had a long day to write to Mr. O'Grady and inspect the arrangements of Mathews, who had found an old friend in Lady Arlingham's maid, to whom she had in her early days been particularly attached. Before the

marriage of Lady Arlingham, she had resided with Mrs. Beauclerk; and Markham, at that time a young girl, had been her attendant.

Thus in a moment was Alice aware of the cause of Mrs. Beauclerk's intimacy with the Countess, and she asked Mathews why she had not before mentioned her knowing Lady Arlingham.

“Why, my dear young lady, it would be hard for me to do that, when I did not know who Lady Arlingham was, when I heard you talk of her. As her Ladyship was unmarried when I knew her as Miss Harburton, I never guessed who she was until last night, when she came up with you to your room, and I caught a glimpse of her face, which I thought I recollected; and when I saw Mrs. Markham this morning, for the first time, I thought I should have gone out of my senses with joy and surprise at finding an old friend, when I did not expect it, in a strange country.”

“Where, Mathews, did my aunt reside when the Countess lived with her?”

“ Abroad, Ma’am, with Lord and Lady Cornwall.”

“ And who were they, Mathews ?”

“ I wonder, Ma’am, that your aunt never told you that Lady Cornwall was her sister.”

“ Sister ! why I never heard that before. How strange that I was kept in ignorance of it !”

“ Why, Miss Alice, dear, now that I think of it, I am not so much astonished ; for my mistress and her sister quarrelled about something or other, and she never afterwards mentioned her name.”

“ That was very unlike my aunt’s generally forgiving disposition, Mathews.”

“ It was, Ma’am, but without doubt she had her own good reasons. Lord Cornwall was an ambassador at V—— when we were with him ; for General Beauclerk was with his regiment in the Indies, and my dear mistress was so fond of her sister’s family that she went with them.”

“ And did you not know, Mathews, that Lord Portland, who was at Mr. O’Grady’s, was Lady Cornwall’s son ?”

“ Portland !—that fine lovely young gentleman ; well, well, how stupid I was ! No, Miss Alice, I did not know it, you may be sure. He was but a week old when we parted from his mother ; and if I heard the baby’s title, I forgot it long ago. Why, my dear young lady, he must be twenty-one now, at least.”

“ I suppose so, Mathews.”

“ He must, Miss, for I never will forget his being born on the very night that your aunt came to me with you in her arms, and said, weeping bitterly, ‘ Mathews, here is a babe but a few hours old, which has been bequeathed to my care by its mother, who survived its birth but a few moments.’ I said that I did not know she had had a friend in V—— who was intimate enough with her to leave her such a charge ; and she answered me by saying, ‘ Ah, Mathews ! she was a dear friend, the wife

of a relation of my husband's.' I asked the baby's name, and she replied, ' Its name, Mathews, shall be the same as mine—Alice Beauclerk.' ”

“ And is it possible, Mathews, that thus she received me, forlorn, and marked by misfortune at my very birth ?”

“ So it is, Miss Beauclerk. When you were about five days old, we left V—— and returned to Ireland, where we ever after remained.”

“ And do you know what became of Lady Cornwall afterwards ?”

“ I only know, Ma'am, that on Lord Cornwall's return (for he had been away from V—— at the birth of his son), he was recalled home to England, where he is now; for I hear from Mrs. Markham he and his lady are as intimate as ever with Lady Arlingham.”

“ Well, Mathews, I am obliged to you for the intimation which you have given me; I should have felt most awkward at being ignorant of the relationship which existed between Mrs.

Beauclerk and a person so intimate with my kind friend Lady Arlingham as the Marchioness of Cornwall appears to be."

"Very true, Ma'am. But you had better prepare for dinner. I suppose your admirer, Sir Leopold, will dine here, as Mrs. Markham tells me he is almost always with her lady."

"My admirer, Mathews! What on earth puts such a ridiculous fancy into your head?"

"Because, Ma'am, I heard Mr. Davies, the house steward who attended you up to town, say that Mr. Joy, Sir Leopold's gentleman, told him that he heard his master saying to himself one day in the carriage, during our journey up to London, that he thought you were exactly the sort of person who would become the title of Lady Lindorf."

"I am much obliged to him, Mathews, for his good opinion of me; but I hope he will never give himself the unnecessary trouble of asking me to fill a situation so responsible as that of his wife."

“ I should not have any objection to his asking you, Ma'am, because he is rich, and they tell me is of a great family; but as for your accepting him, poor old gentleman, that would be a different matter altogether.”

CHAPTER XIX.

ALICE had been reading for the Countess, on the second morning after her arrival, when a carriage stopped at the door, and the Marchioness of Cornwall was announced.

“ Adelaide, my love, how do you do ? ” said the majestic-looking woman to Lady Arlingham ; while her eagle eye hastily scanned the beautiful form and face of Alice.

“ Well, Maude, I am so happy to see you ! I know not when we met. But allow me to introduce Miss Beauclerk.”

“ Miss Beauclerk, I am delighted to see you. I knew that Lady Arlingham expected you, but I was not aware that you had arrived, or should have called on you before. When did you come ? ”

“ A day or two ago only.”

“ Then I am not much behind time in paying my compliments to you. Perhaps you do not know that my beloved sister was your protectress, Mrs. Beauclerk, and for that reason I must always feel an interest in your welfare.”

Alice bowed, and thanked Lady Cornwall for her kindness, at the same time adding, that she was fully aware of the relationship to her friend.

Lady Cornwall looked at Lady Arlingham, who blushed and became confused as Alice acknowledged the truth of knowing her to be Mrs. Beauclerk's sister, but they did not afterwards appear to notice it. After a pause Lady Cornwall continued addressing Alice.

“ Now my dear Miss Beauclerk, though my dear Alice and I unfortunately were not on the terms which sisters should be, I should be exceedingly distressed if I was not permitted to pay every attention in my power to any friend of hers, but most particularly to you, to whom she was so fondly attached.—Lady Arlingham

and I are most intimate and peculiar friends, and you must allow me to insist upon your becoming one too. In fact, we have ever been inseparable, and I trust you will permit me to class you amongst my most peculiar favourites. Will you accept my friendship?"

"I shall feel myself to be most exceedingly honoured, Lady Cornwall, by your flattering proposal, and shall with pleasure accede to your kind offer of permitting me to be your friend."

"I thank you, Miss Beauclerk, and trust nothing will ever arise to diminish the good understanding which has arisen between us. By the way, Adelaide, now that I have time to tell you, do you know that I heard from your favourite, Portland, to-day?"

"Indeed!—I trust he is well.—Where is he now?"

"At St. Petersburg, deep in the trammels of office. He writes in good spirits; though he says he has not been well, but is now better."

"Does he say what was the matter?"

“ No, only alludes to lowness of spirits, but, as you know, he is subject to those.”

“ Indeed he is. But I wonder what cause is now to be assigned for them ?”

“ Oh ! you may be sure, the old one. Love, love, as usual.”

“ If so, Maude, he will soon get over it.”

“ Yes, you know, Adelaide, constancy is not his forte. Poor fellow, he is always falling in love, and as quickly falling out of it again.”

“ I suppose some lovely Russian incognita, muffled up in furs, has rekindled his amatory propensities.”

“ I think not, for he writes in an ambiguous strain, and hints at leaving some dear one behind him.”

“ Then you may rest assured the ice of St. Petersburg will cool his broiling passion. To be sure, how like Portland it is. Perhaps now, Maude, some foolish girl is pining and sighing for the gay Lothario. He shames your rearing.”

“ He inherits his gallantry from his father, Adelaide. Do you not agree with me ?”

Lady Arlingham coloured, and bit her lip, but did not venture a reply to the cutting sarcasm which was conveyed in the remark of her friend, who shortly after rose, and took her leave.

But Alice had been unmindful of what passed, so intently had she been occupied in brooding on the startling intelligence conveyed to her in the conversation relative to Lord Portland. The truth of it she could not dare to doubt, for from what more authentic source than his mother could it come. He had then but trifled with her heart, as he had done before with others perhaps as tender and confiding, and left her to mourn the depravity of the being she had adored. But hope unbidden stole upon her soul, and whispered that still a chance remained for her, and that, though unfaithful to all before, still his pledged faith would be preserved inviolable to her. As she thought thus, she was unmindful of the length of time which had elapsed from

the departure of the Marchioness, and ignorant that the eyes of the Countess had been stedfastly regarding her, as if she read in her countenance the workings of her mind.

The voice of Sir Leopold roused her, and while he was addressing Lady Arlingham on some (to him) important circumstance, Alice hoped to have been able to effect her escape from the room. But his bright twinkling little orbs of vision were too much on the alert to allow that, and she was recalled by his entreaties for her to return.

“ Do, Miss Beauclerk, come here for one moment, pray do, and see what I have got, notwithstanding your cruelty. Here is the very impression which you refused to give me the morning you got the little tidy parcel at Dudley Grove. Now, my dear Lady Arlingham, would you believe it possible that Miss Beauclerk, who looks so handsome and good-natured there, would refuse to oblige me with a peep at a seal which came to her on a little brown paper parcel on the 25th day of last month. Now you know

how I prize any thing in the way of a crest, or coat of arms, and though I got a peep for two or three minutes at the little paquet, I could not decipher the motto which was round it, for my eyes were that morning a little less bright than usual, for you know how sharp the Lindorf eyes generally are. Well, I was telling you that I prayed, and implored, and Miss Charity Dudley entreated, and requested, but all was vain, the paper parcel was put up, and I lost, as I thought, all chance of finding out the business. Indeed to be candid with you, ladies, Miss Charity Dudley was guilty on the occasion of a singular and highly reprehensible misconduct, which, though meant to serve me, only increased my dislike to the young lady,—for she knelt down and peeped into the key-hole, and saw Miss Beauclerk unpack a small picture which was placed in a red morocco case, and though she could not see who it was, she saw Miss Beauclerk looking at it, and—hem !——The Lindorfs do not blab, Miss Beauclerk, you need not fear me. I am only explaining to you both about

this crest ; here it is.”—And Sir Leopold drew from his pocket-book the envelope of a letter, which he presented with much solemnity to Lady Arlingham, who, on looking at it, smiled, and returned it to the indefatigable herald, and said—

“ Well, Sir Leopold, and what wonder has the finding of this cover achieved ?”

“ Only, my dear Lady Arlingham, that it enables me to know from whom the letter or packet came, and secondly, that I know the owner of this crest.”

“ And pray, whose is this crest, since it is such an important one, Sir Leopold ?”

“ Major Baring’s, Lady Arlingham.”

“ And who in the name of all that is wonderful is Major Baring himself ?”

“ Lord Pettigrew’s nephew, a nice young man indeed. He was with his uncle at Harwich until he sailed. I am sure you may recollect seeing him with Lord Portland, whose most particular and confidential friend he is.”

The baronet paused, and Alice, ready to

faint, was obliged to hold by the arm of a sofa, which fortunately was within her reach. Lady Arlingham laughed immoderately, and exclaimed—

“ Well, really I feel obliged, truly obliged, by your kind and confidential interference, Sir Leopold. You have enabled me to find out who sends brown paper parcels to Miss Beauclerk. As her guardian, I must be careful of this Major Baring, and not allow him opportunities of forwarding his formidable crest upon the covers of her letters.”

While Lady Arlingham thus spoke, Alice contrived to get out of the room, and leave the tormenting, impertinent baronet to the company of his cousin, who again contrived to make him repeat his and Miss Charity Dudley's joint exertions to make out the mysterious seal. She was not at any loss to make out whom the original of the portrait was, which had been received and welcomed in the manner so particularly described to, and by the baronet. She also hailed with joy the evident symptoms of inci-

pient jealousy, which she observed so manifestly in the discourse of Sir Leopold; for though at first she had regretted the prospect of his marriage with Alice, and had been shocked at the Marchioness wishing it, now that she saw the pressing necessity of her immediate marriage with some one ere the return of Lord Portland, she began to look forward to her being Lady Lindorf with earnest hope and anxiety.

CHAPTER XX.

AFTER an autumn passed in the oppression and heat of London, Alice with Lady Arlingham, accepted the invitation of Lady Cornwall to visit Fairlands, her Ladyship's seat, situated in Herefordshire. The most bland and winning courtesy marked the Marchioness's demeanour towards her, and every hour seemed to increase the friendship which she manifested in each action. The beauty and novelty of Alice attracted the attention and admiration of the fashionable crowd assembled at Fairlands for the Christmas season; and were her heart not previously engaged, it would have fallen captive to one who would have placed a Ducal coronet on her brow. But secure in the possession of a

love so ardent as that which absorbed her, she passed unscathed through the temptations which environed her.

“I wonder, Maude,” said Lady Arlingham to the Marchioness one morning, as they sat together in the Countess’s dressing-room, “does not Alice observe the devoted attention of the Duke.”

“She does, Adelaide, but she wishes to appear unconscious of it. I mark her well, and deeply in each action, and I see the purport of her conduct. She will not leave it in the power of any to breathe into the ears of Alfred her seeming forgetfulness, or indifference during the period of his absence. We must hurry on our plot, for Portland has been away now nearly four months; should the present ministry be dissolved, Pettigrew will be instantaneously recalled, and with him comes our ruin.”

“What can we do to avert it, for she will never marry as we wish? Rely on me, Maude, her heart will break first.”

“ And if it must break, we cannot help it. Our purpose must be achieved, unless your saintship, Adelaide, would connive at such a union.”

“ Forbear, Lady Cornwall, I command you. Do not think that because one dreadful sin is stamped upon my soul, I will hearken to another still more awful. Think not that because you are leagued with me in bonds of crime, which nothing save death can dissever, that I will even listen to the horrible inuendo. No, I swear by all my earthly and eternal hopes, to save those wretched beings, were my misdeeds that very moment to be made manifest to the world. Fye, Maude, I did not think your heart was quite so black.”

“ Well, Adelaide, when that burst of passion has subsided, and that you will give ear to my words, I will speak. What could rouse in your mind the thought that I would sanction or permit so iniquitous a proceeding as would be Portland’s marriage with Alice Beauclerk? Think you that, even were the one great

obstacle to be averted and annulled, that I, the Marchioness of Cornwall, would permit my acknowledged son and heir to wed a poor and houseless being—an unknown and unfriended girl? Where would then be the pride of ancestry, the power of birth, and force of wealth? Where would be then the stainless escutcheon handed from father unto son, since our ennobled house first won the right to bear upon their unconquered and unblemished shields, ‘*Sans tache et sans reproche*?’ For shame, Adelaide Arlingham; you should have known me better.”

“Alas! too well I know you, Maude. But if I wronged you, which now, methinks, I did, I crave your pardon. Sin is too much, and too long a time our confidant, for us to doubt its power still to tempt us. But, Maude, since she scorns the Duke of Brecon, she will, believe me, never marry Sir Leopold Lindorf. His age, his appearance, his station in the world, his property, are but poor competitors when opposed against those of his Grace.”

“You are always wrong. Between Sir Leo-

pold and the Duke you judge right when you say the comparison is striking ; but, believe me, Alice is too much in love to think of wedding a man who so strongly resembles Alfred as does his Grace of Brecon. I aver to you, and the sequel will prove my truth, that when she finds Portland has forsaken her, she will not require much persuasion to throw herself away upon the Baronet. Women, Adelaide, love contradiction ; Alice, to pique Alfred, will marry a fool !”

“ If she does, she deceives me ; but my help shall not be wanting. Sir Leopold is as much in love as we can wish, and even his hereditary pride has given way before her beauty. Her mysterious parentage has been glossed over by my efforts, and he believes my fictitious tale, because the dolt likes it.”

“ Oh, Lindorf any one can humbug ; so I do not give you much credit for your artifice, Adelaide. After all, I wish that Alice had seen the Duke before she met Alfred.”

“ My words this time, at all events, Maude, are coming true. I prophesied that you would,

notwithstanding your determination to the contrary, become proud and fond of Alice !”

“ Why, I must be proud of her, Adelaide. Her pure and brilliant beauty would adorn and grace a throne ; while her angelic mind would render her a fit inhabitant for heaven.”

“ And still you can bear to see her married to a being incapable of estimating her qualities of mind or body ?”

“ I can ; for ‘ self-preservation,’ saith the old adage, ‘ is the first law of nature.’ If she is not Lindorf’s wife, and that soon, we have but the last resource, which, to avoid, I would court death, and those judgments which you profess to dread, Adelaide.”

“ I am aware of it, and leave all in your hands. Proceed as you think best, and I shall be satisfied. By the by, I did not mention to you that she has got Portland’s miniature ?”

“ Impossible, Adelaide ! it was sent to Leonora Saville ere Alfred went to Ireland, or ever dreamt of Alice.”

“ True it is, notwithstanding. Lindorf saw

the packet in which it came, and the crest was Baring's."

"And how did he know that it was Portland's picture which it contained?"

"Simply because one of those Dudleys with whom Alice was saw it arrive, and witnessed the reception which it met. If you please, I shall ask Baring about the matter, for he comes here to-day (does he not?) if you think well of it."

"Certainly not. Major Baring is a sharp and clever person; he would guess at the matter, and inform Portland."

"Perhaps so. As he stays but until to-morrow, he perchance may never guess that Alice is the Miss Beauclerk to whom he was entrusted with the parcel."

"It would be better if he did not. He might speak to her of him, and keep alive remembrances which had better be forgotten. Mind, I this day commence my operations; you must play your part too; it is a difficult one, but one which stern necessity compels. I must have no squeamish, conscientious whisperings of re-

morse : to save ourselves, Alice must be sacrificed. Better to ruin her than destroy him for whom we have suffered and lost so much !”

“ I envy you, Maude. Would that I were possessed of your determination and self-command ; if I were, I too could laugh at conscience !”

CHAPTER XXI.

LADY ARLINGHAM met Major Baring with that manner which won the admiration of the world. She did not know him well, but was partial to him, for he was the friend, the bosom friend of Portland.

While seated together in the library during the course of the morning, she said:—

“By the way, Major, you will have to congratulate Lady Cornwall, the mother of your friend, who is at present in the greatest spirits at the news which she has this morning received.”

“Indeed, Lady Arlingham ! I was not aware of any subject on which I had to felicitate the

Marchioness. I must intrude upon your kindness for information."

"Lord Portland is to be married directly to your cousin, Lady Leonora Saville."

"To my cousin? Really, Lady Arlingham, you quite astonish me. I knew that the connection was wished for, but I imagined Portland's heart was elsewhere engaged."

"I believe it was, but not a word of that to our hostess. It was a little affair, 'pour passer le temps,' while he was in Ireland. It must be quite over (indeed I know it is), for the marriage with Lady Leonora takes place immediately."

"Even before Lord Pettigrew's return?"

"Yes, for all parties judge rightly in having the matter closed at once. It has been some time going on, and as Lord Pettigrew may remain for some considerable time abroad, Lady Cornwall is anxious for the union to take place at St. Petersburg."

"Does her Ladyship journey thither?"

"No, but she arranges everything here with respect to settlements, and the other et ceteras."

Lord Cornwall is too great an invalid since the melancholy accident which deprived him of Lady Madeline, to enter into any details on the subject; he seldom leaves his room even yet."

"I know how much his affectionate heart must be pained at the awful occurrence, and trust that this match which is in contemplation will afford him satisfaction."

"Indeed, Major Baring, I am convinced it will. Lady Leonora is very amiable."

"Why, you know, she is my cousin, and I must therefore agree in your opinion; but I fear she is not calculated to make Portland happy; she is very inanimate."

"Yes, too much so for my taste. But I rather believe that the Earl is extremely attached to her Ladyship."

"Lady Arlingham, you know all the secrets of the Cornwall family, and I will be candid with you. Portland is not attached to Leonora; on the contrary, I know he dislikes her."

"You surprise me! Why then does he marry her?"

“I know not, but I must suppose it is because she has wealth, unbounded wealth, at her command. But I never before thought Portland capable of giving his hand without his heart.”

“I dare say, Major Baring, the Marchioness will speak to you herself upon this subject. To her you can admit of having heard the information which I have given you, but it may be as well to appear ignorant of the subject to others, and less interested persons, as the marriage has not yet been publicly announced to the world. I dare say Portland himself will acquaint you of it when he thinks proper.”

“Unless to Lady Cornwall, you may be assured I will be silent on the business,” replied Major Baring, as he separated from the Countess to dress for dinner.

Lady Arlingham straightway proceeded to her friend the Marchioness, to communicate the success of her undertaking, and prepare her for what was to follow.

The name of Baring riveted the attention of Alice, in consequence of Sir Leopold's informa-

tion concerning that being the name of the possessor of the seal which had awakened his heraldic curiosity. She was soon convinced that he was really the confidential friend of Lord Portland, by his constant allusion to his name, and also by her tormentor, the Baronet, assuring her, that though she did not recognize the gentleman, he (Sir Leopold) imagined that she had some previous knowledge of him. He chuckled at his wit, and though he was secretly annoyed at the presence of a person whom he believed to be her received admirer, he walked away to observe her demeanour towards his fancied rival.

Alice felt sincerely thankful at the mistake of the Baronet concerning the portrait, and resolved to strengthen rather than strive to diminish his opinion. Unconscious that the eyes of Lady Cornwall and Lady Arlingham were studiously fixed upon her, she looked forward with anxiety to the hope of being introduced to the Major, and being thus enabled to hear of the Earl.

Seated opposite to him at dinner, Major Baring scarcely turned his eyes from regarding Alice; and when on inquiring her name, he found it Beauclerk, he immediately surmised that the object of the Earl's passion was before him. The peculiar loveliness of the interesting girl insensibly drew from him mental comparisons between her and his cousin, while her perfectly unconscious manner, and innate dignity, tended to increase the marked difference which was between them. "If," thought he, "she is as constant to him as she is beautiful, he is a villain."

Seated near him was Sir Leopold Lindorf, who, when the ladies had withdrawn, addressed him—

"You know Miss Beauclerk, Major, don't you?"

"I have not that pleasure, Sir Leopold, but will ask you to extend your friendship towards me by introducing me."

"I won't though," thought Sir Leopold, as he smiled at the Major to exhibit the Lindorf

teeth: "this gentleman thinks I am a fool, but I'll outwit him."

"Pray, Major, do you know a good miniature painter? I should wish to have my likeness taken."

"I really have heard of so many, Sir Leopold, that I cannot venture to recommend one more than another."

"And, Major, have you never had your portrait taken?"

"Never; I was not vain enough to wish for a flattering resemblance; and truth whispered, that as I only could hope for an ugly one, I need not wish to leave it to posterity."

"But, Major, did you never feel yourself tempted to send a likeness to some dear object of your affection?"

"Never; for in my youth I was too busy to think of falling in love; and now that I am older, the ladies would not think me worth having. Pray, Sir Leopold, is it for a love token or a family bequest to the House of Lindorf, that you require to have your likeness taken?"

Sir Leopold made no answer; but wishing the Major to the infernal shades for his intrusive gallantry, and impenetrable closeness, turned to address his discourse to some other person.

Alice was seated at the harp on the entrance of Major Baring, who approached her, and was about to introduce himself to her, when the Marchioness advanced; and calling him to sit by her, allowed Alice to conclude the air which she had been playing before she spoke. Alice, with an intuitive idea that the conversation might turn upon the absent object of her thoughts, appeared to engage herself with a *porte-feuille* which was near her, and was so close to them both, that she audibly heard each word that was uttered.

“Have you heard from Portland of late, Major Baring?” inquired the lady; while Alice turned so as to prevent her rising colour from being visible.

“Yes, I heard a short time since; he had not been well.”

“No, but you will be delighted to hear the dear fellow is now quite well again.”

.

“ When I heard from him he imagined that the climate did not very well agree with him; but now I suppose he thinks differently.”

“ Why I should think so indeed. I perceive you have heard of his intended marriage.”

“ Yes, and allow me to congratulate you on an event which, when last we parted, I imagined never could have taken place. Your wishes, I suppose, went far in altering his intentions.”

“ Indeed they did. You know how anxious he is to please me, who have no other object in the world but him. We parted less affectionately than usual, for we had, for the first time since his infancy, a slight misunderstanding.”

“ I am truly sorry to hear you say so. I know that Portland only studies your pleasure, unless he is greatly altered.”

“ Why, Major Baring, I had set my heart upon his marrying Lady Leonora Saville : at first he was obstinately opposed to it, and when we were parting he told me that he loved elsewhere. Of course I feigned more anger than I really felt, and opposed his headstrong determi-

nation to marry this Irish girl, whose name he would not tell me. He said she was beautiful, fascinating, amiable, and every thing that I could wish ; but who or what she was he persisted in keeping a mystery. Well, my dear son left me, and I was inconsolable, fearing that he would commit some rash and desperate act, which might bring the odium of the world upon him. I had determined to write to him, and promise my forgiveness for his disobedience, when I received a letter full of penitence and sorrow. You know, Major Baring, that the happiness of our only child is the sole aim of the Marquis and myself, and when I found him thus pained for his misconduct, I wrote in my usual manner, and holding out hopes that in time I might be favourable to his love. You may imagine my surprise when he replied by telling me that the virtues of the Lady Leonora had at last awakened his long dormant affection, and craving his father's and my blessing on his union. Of course I answered his dutiful epistle as a mother should, and since then have been hurrying matters for the cele-

bration of the nuptials which are to take place at St. Petersburg."

Luckily for Alice, the voice of the old and infirm Lord Cornwall, summoning his friend Major Baring to a game of chess, drew him from her neighbourhood, and she was able, by the greatest exertions, to leave the room unobserved and unnoticed.

CHAPTER XXII.

How is your dear young lady this morning, Mrs. Mathews?" inquired Lady Arlingham's maid, at the door of Alice's chamber, on the twenty-first morning after the death-blow was given to her hopes and happiness by the Marchioness.

"I trust she will be better, Mrs. Markham, thanks to the kindness of her friends. She is still asleep. Shortly after you left her the crisis came, and she dropped into a slumber, in which Mr. ——— thinks she will remain some hours longer."

"If so, Mrs. Mathews, lie down in the dressing-room, and I will watch by Miss Beauclerk. You are worn out with fatigue and trouble."

“ I could not sleep a wink. The dear child might awake, and want me. She would be fretted if she did not find me at my post.—Hush!—I thought I heard—”

“ Mathews !” called Alice, in a voice tremulous and weak ; the old woman hastened to her side, and caught her hand.—

“ God be thanked, my darling, that you are better.”

“ Where am I, Mathews ?—I have been asleep so long, and had such frightful dreams !—Where am I ?”

“ With friends, Miss Alice, friends that loved you, and cared for you, my child. You have been ill, very ill.”

“ I am sure of it ; my head is giddy and confused.”

“ You must not speak, Miss Alice ; the doctors have forbid it. Lay down your head, and try to sleep again.”

“ I will, Mathews,—dear, dear friend ; hand me a cup of water, and support my head.”

She drank, and again resigned herself to rest,

unconscious as yet that the wildering dreams which had exhausted her health and spirits were the reiteration of realities as awful, and as maddening."

Days and weeks crept by the suffering Alice, who, by slow degrees, became gradually restored to health, — the unremitting care of Lady Arlingham, and Mathews, being as principally concerned in causing her recovery, under Providence, as was the aid of medicine, or the skill of its most successful practitioners. Day and night, during that long and awful visitation, was the wretched Countess near her, watching, tending, and directing ; Lady Cornwall too, in horror at the terrible success which had attended her stratagem, was as indefatigable in her exertions as was her friend, though conscience and remorse had less to do with them.

As the true state of her unhappy case broke upon the weakened Alice, she was enabled to bear up against it by her submissive, and truly Christian spirit. She bewailed her own error in hearkening to the seductive voice of deceit, and

she bowed to the judgment which had fallen on it. Her apparent friends strove to console, without appearing to do so, and the name of Portland never by any chance was permitted to meet her ear.

The spring was far advanced before Alice was completely recovered in her bodily health; for that of her mind was for ever gone. Her form, which had been elastic, and just full enough to pourtray the standard of beauty, was shrunken and debilitated, and the brilliant, warm colouring which had shone upon her cheek, had vanished. Yet still was she eminently beautiful; beautiful even to please and satisfy the most critical observer. But the inward and mental beauty outvied the exterior charms which enshrined her, and to know and appreciate the heart of Alice Beauclerk, was to love her.

The London winter would have been passed by Alice with more content in the quiet of her chamber, than in the gay and heartless amusements of the world which she was compelled to join in. Lady Arlingham insisted on her striving

to appear happy, and Alice sought to please her kind, and ever considerate friend, by wearing the semblance of it. What could more beautifully apply to the stricken and 'forsaken' Alice, than the true and touching words of our unrivalled poet:—

“ And thus the heart will break, though brokenly live on ?”

Her tender heart was broken, and still existence claimed her as an inmate of that life which now possessed no charms for her.

Sir Leopold, indefatigable in his inquiries, was in ignorance of the cause of her severe and lingering illness, and believed Lady Arlingham's declaration of her having taken cold at Fairlands, through the medium of thin shoes and wet feet. He was incessant in his exertions to amuse her, and procure for her whatever he heard her profess to like or admire. The most beautiful flowers, the rarest and most costly fruits, were sure to be at her command; while he himself, poor man, though grievously afflicted

with the asthma, would read for hours without tiring, to gratify Alice, who had one day unluckily admitted that her eyes continued too weak to allow her the pleasure of reading for any length of time.

But his efforts were unavailing, and Alice never once imagined that he could be thinking of her in any way but that of a friend; she could not imagine that the man who was old enough to be her father was planning to make her his wife, and without the smallest doubt of his ultimate success in the business. But she was destined to know and understand his meaning for all his civilities; for through his friend and cousin, Lady Arlingham, he proffered his titles and honours, and laid them at her feet.

Extremely surprised, Alice entreated the Countess to offer to Sir Leopold her thanks and gratitude for the favour conferred upon her, but begged to decline the honour intended her.

Lady Arlingham, evidently amazed at a refusal which she appeared not to have suspected, endeavoured to dissuade her from her

determination by every argument which she could think of. Alice knew not what to say to the Countess, but that she could not love him.

“And why should you not, Alice? He is universally acknowledged to be an excellent and worthy person, one calculated to make you happy; he is possessed of a splendid property, totally unencumbered, and boasts an excellent descent. Surely you must have some cause for thus refusing him.”

“Dearest Lady Arlingham, I know him to be all that you say, but still I could not marry him; besides” (here her voice faltered, and she turned aside to hide her tears) “I could never marry any one.”

“Why, Alice, why do you say so? You must tell me why, dear girl. It is not fair to have a secret from a friend so warmly attached to you as I am. Speak, love; open your heart to me, for well I know some hidden secret presses on it.”

“I cannot tell you, Lady Arlingham, the cause of my rejection of your friend, or the root

of that sorrow which you rightly judge presses upon me; for, my dear friend, you would not think so well of me as you now do."

"Surely, Alice, your indiscretions, whatever they may be, cannot be of so glaring a description as to require the support of mystery. You must tell me all, and then I shall be enabled to judge of your right to scorn the addresses of Sir Leopold."

"Lady Arlingham, kind friend and protectress, surely you will not think worse of me than I deserve, when I tell you that I loved another."

"Loved, Alice, is past time: do you still love the object on whom your affections had been placed? Does he love you, or is he worthy of your love?"

"Loved him, I did; but, alas! he loves not me now; his vows are plighted to another, and that other may even now be his wedded wife."

"For shame, Alice! Do you profess to love a being who has forsaken you—a being who is the husband of another? Fie, Alice! whoever

he is, he is unworthy of you. Cast him off—forget him—leave him to himself, and that man's thoughts will not be enviable. I can feel for you, Alice; I can sympathize with you; but I can advise, too."

"If you knew the being that I loved, you could not think that I could forget him. Oh, Lady Arlingham! that man's treachery has broken my foolish heart."

"Not quite, Alice. I can enter into your feelings, for my case was similar to yours. I loved—aye, Alice, madly loved. I gave up all on earth; I would have rendered up my hope of heaven itself for him who wronged and ruined me; but, Alice, I was betrayed, and in the end I was revenged. Even to this hour my victim rests in undisturbed security; but the hour is coming—it is at hand—when he shall feel that sharper than a scorpion's sting is the envenomed wrath of a neglected and abandoned woman. Alice, I married: I could not love my husband, for my heart was still with him that blighted it; but he loved me truly, fondly, and devotedly,

and I returned his affection with duty and esteem. He is gone to another and a better world, where, if I join him, I shall be more blessed than I deserve to be. The world may think me gay, Alice; for my anguish, though deep, is hidden."

"Lady Arlingham, your confidence deserves a returning one. You shall judge for me yourself: my love, who has forsaken me, is—Lord Portland."

"Alice, you dream. Portland! You must mistake, dear girl, when thus you speak. Where could you meet him?"

"In Ireland, ere I knew that I possessed a friend so kind in England, as I have found you to be. He won my first affections; he never would leave this kingdom, did I not consent, on his return, to marry him. He deluded me, he left me, and he has forsaken me."

"I could not think thus badly of Portland, Alice, did I not hear the recital from your lips. He is unworthy to possess a heart like thine. Forget him, Alice—forget your false lover, in

his new character of a husband. Ere this he calls the Lady Saville wife; ere this he has forgotten you; and if, perchance, your image recurs to his remembrance, he banishes it from his polluted mind, and but jests at the idea of your misery."

"What shall I do, Lady Arlingham? Advise me, direct me; for I scarcely know what now I utter."

"Alice, Lady Cornwall is a kind and clever woman; she loves you, and would befriend you. I will consult her. She shall not know the iniquity of her child, for it would cause a breach between them for ever; but I will state your case impartially. Will you, dear girl, be led and directed by her counsels?"

"I will, Lady Arlingham. That friend who nurtured and protected me with tenderest care and solicitude gave me to your care. She commanded me with her last words to be guided and directed in all things by you; to you, therefore, do I commit myself, and whatever you and Lady Cornwall advise, that will I do."

Lady Arlingham kissed the pallid cheek of her victim, and, hurrying from her presence, sought that of the Marchioness, to whom with rapture she declared her victory. Lady Cornwall, equally delighted, returned with the Countess to conclude the scheme which had worked so well for them upon the wretched Alice.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ALICE saw Sir Leopold,—calmly informed him that she had consented to marry him; and received his thanks and declarations of happiness with composure. He was too much overpowered with ecstasy to observe the stifled emotions which at times were apparent during the interview, which was a short, and painful one to Alice; who felt thankful to the Marchioness, whose entrance interrupted a flow of complimentary nonsense which the Baronet was repeating; and she never heard the dissertation which followed concerning the new-setting of the Lindorf jewels, of which Sir Leopold was justly proud. She sat mute, and motionless, and never heeded the length of time which he detained the Mar-

chioness on the important subject. However, as her Ladyship was determined to sit him out, he was obliged to walk off, and amuse himself as best he could, by arranging in his own mind the manner in which his alliance would be put forth to the best advantage in his elaborate pedigree.

“ My dear Alice,” said Lady Cornwall, on his departure, “ I was determined to get rid of him for you, as your spirits seem so very low that he must have been a sad annoyance to you. However, certainly there is one thing in his favour, which is, that the more you will know him, the more you will like him. Take care of yourself, dearest; I suppose you will not venture to Lady Townly’s this evening. Indeed I would not advise you, for you look much jaded. I shall be with you early to-morrow, as Sir Leopold has requested me to meet him here on business. Good bye, love.” And away went the heartless woman, leaving Alice overpowered with affliction at the occurrences of the morning.

Lady Arlingham would not suffer her to be a

moment alone; and gave up her engagements of the evening, in order to soothe and comfort Alice, whose mental agitations had induced a slight return of her late feverish attack.

“ I have one thing more to trouble you with, Lady Arlingham,” said she, during the course of the afternoon. “ It is to receive the only gift which Lord Portland ever gave me. I could not, now that he is married, and that I am likewise about to be the same, think of retaining an article so dangerous as this. It is his portrait; once the only comfort granted to me during his absence. I have not looked upon it since I heard the intelligence of his intended marriage; and I never shall.—To you I consign it.—Give it him.—Tell him, “ that as long as he preserved his faith I kept mine.” But you need not tell him that mine will be preserved, until the green sod rests upon the grave of the broken-hearted Alice Beauclerk. Do not speak unkindly to him on my account; for from my soul I forgive him. When we meet, I trust I shall be enabled to do so, as if we never before saw each other. Here,

take this picture, Lady Arlingham ; he can give it to his wife, when he discards the image of Alice from his heart, where once I still believe and hope I was happy enough to hold a place." She presented the miniature to Lady Arlingham, and, giving way to her feelings, wept bitterly.

" Alice, it pains me to see you thus. Dispel those luring and depressing reminiscences, and respect yourself. You should not leave it in the power of the world to speak unkindly of you. If you enter life thus miserable and wretched, observations will arise derogatory to your fair fame, and the honour of your excellent husband. Think of the happiness which awaits you as Lady Lindorf. Rank, wealth, connexions, and friends. Why, Alice, you will be envied by all the unmarried women of your acquaintance. You will have the undivided love of Sir Leopold, and my counsel and advice, and friendship, always at your command."

" I know all that you say to be true. But a horrible presentiment arises on my heart, that I

shall not long enjoy the goods of this life which you have enumerated. May I deserve them, for they are valueless to me."

"You must retire for the night, Alice; and Mathews must administer a composing draught to you. Your nerves are shaken, and you require rest. Come, take my arm, dearest; you must to bed."

Alice tottered up stairs, clinging to Lady Arlingham. With the help of Mathews, she was soon in bed, and by the aid of laudanum, which Lady Arlingham insisted upon her taking, soon asleep, if sleep that could be called which was produced by powerful narcotics, and distracted by visions harassing and painful to the sufferer.

With the morning, however, came calmness and resignation; and when she met Lady Arlingham, her painful excitement had passed away, and left but the traces of its visitation on her countenance. Her manner, perfectly collected, showed the force of resolution; and her hostess each moment saw more to astonish, and more

to admire, in the single-minded and upright Alice.

The visits of Sir Leopold were, however, trials which, with all her firmness of resolve, she could not receive without experiencing the most poignant anguish. As she beheld him, the future master of her destiny,—the being to whom before the altar of her Maker she was to pledge her faith,—the object in whom was to be concentrated her hopes and happiness,—the pang of bitter woe would pierce her blighted heart, and call to her remembrance the idol which once had been there enshrined.

To Mr. O'Grady she wrote as lengthened an account as she was able, of the change which had taken place. To him she could detail her sentiments and afflictions, for he knew how she before had felt. She found it easy to say how she had been forsaken; but it was a task of difficulty to tell him to whom she had transferred the right of loving her. He had seen her chosen, and her accepted lover; and well was he able to note the difference which existed between them. She

felt that he would despise her, and as she thought so, her tears blotted the pages which she traced. She had none other friend to whom the communication need to be made; and as she sealed her mournful intelligence, she remembered that she had no other duty to perform, but await the fulfilment of that ceremony which would forbid Lady Lindorf to think or sorrow on the griefs of Alice Beauclerk.

The affairs relative to the celebration of her marriage, she left in the hands of Lady Arlingham; who, with Lady Cornwall, continued to keep her as apart from Sir Leopold as possible. He delighted at the eclat which was about to attend his nuptials, and behaved, as the Countess told Alice, most liberally and munificently towards her; and though not a close or a penurious person, his love did not decrease when he heard that the sum of twenty thousand pounds, which Lady Arlingham possessed independent of her jointure, would be bequeathed by her Ladyship to her ward at her decease.

When Alice heard of this intended gift, she

could not express her amazement. She pondered on what could possibly be the cause of such an unexpected, and munificent act of generosity; and could not refrain from expressing her surprise to the Countess.

Her colour heightened at the words of Alice, but she smiled, and taking her hand affectionately, said—

“ My dearest Alice, independently of the love which your own disposition has created in my breast, I owe what I am about to do to the memory of another Alice, one even dearer to me than you can ever be. Your rank in life requires that you should not become a wife; dependent on the bounty of your husband; and trust me when I tell you, that had I never seen you, the gift would have been the same.”

“ And, my kind friend, why ?”

“ It matters not to you, Alice; but your sainted aunt could tell the reason.”

“ You will pardon me when I ask, is relationship the cause of such unexampled friendship ?”

“ I will answer your question, Alice. On the

faith and hope of a Christian, you are not in the most distant manner my relation or connexion. As the wife of Sir Leopold Lindorf, you will be, in some way which he can best declare, a cousin."

"Then, Lady Arlingham, friendship alone has been the cause."

"No, Alice; I will not be false enough to say that you now judge rightly. Friendship is not the origin of the gift which I have bestowed upon you."

"What then, Lady Arlingham, can it be?"

"Justice, Alice, justice only. But on this subject we must never again speak. For the sake of your earliest friend, cease to make inquiries which may not be answered."

"I have done, dearest Lady Arlingham. An allusion such as yours to the memory of Mrs. Beauclerk is a talisman which I can never refuse to act in obedience to."

"I know it, Alice. But I had almost forgotten to ask you about the setting of these

diamonds: they are, as you may perceive, beautiful. There are but two sets superior in the kingdom. Sir Leopold affirms that they have been three centuries in the possession of his family."

"I am sure they are very fine; but do with them as you think best; perhaps I shall never wear them."

"For shame, Alice. You must wear them, my child. Lady Lindorf must be the most brilliant gem in the gay world. You, Alice, will adorn your rank, not your rank adorn you."

"Perhaps so, Lady Arlingham. Time will tell. But pray put aside those foolish baubles; it pains me to look upon them."

The Countess laid the jewels in their case, and closed it. Alice felt relieved at their disappearance, and met Lady Cornwall, who soon after entered, with affection and gratitude for the marked interest which she had evinced in her welfare; and was apparently resigned to the

inevitable step which had been planned for her, as she imagined, through disinterested kindness and zealous friendship.

“ My Alice,” said her Ladyship, “ I have been to La Blonde, and arranged all with her concerning your bridal dress. It will be magnificent, very nearly the same as Lady Florence Balfour’s,—much richer, however.”

“ Thank you, Lady Cornwall,” answered Alice, with a sigh so deep and painful, that her noble friends both turned aside to quell emotions which she should not witness.

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THE FORSAKEN.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mr. O'Grady to Alice Beauclerk.

My dearest Alice,

I TRUST I need not say how severely I am grieved at your last letter, which I hasten to answer, in order that you may be still assured of the unalterable interest which I take in all that concerns you.

My sweet young friend, I feel indeed pained by the occurrences which you have related, and, to say the least, surprised. You have met a return,

unworthy, indeed, from one whose countenance appeared to be but the index of his mind. If ever a being was formed to deceive, it was the Earl. He has proved himself undeserving of that love which I know was granted from your tender heart, when implicitly relying on the fidelity of his; and you must prove yourself to be superior to the acknowledged weakness of your sex, by forgetting him. An old man's counsels may be obsolete, and uncongenial with the accepted forms of society in the present time; but rest assured that the hurried step which you are about to take, is one needless and unnecessary. You can as well evince your carelessness and indifference by remaining (for some time at least) Alice Beauclerk, as by plunging into matrimony headlong, and unadvised. Consider well, my child, ere you commit an act you may repent of. Let no vain and hurtful pride tempt you to wed a man you do not love, or cannot esteem. And think, that if in a moment of unrestrained passion you enter into wedlock, years—years of remorse will be

your recompense. Come to us; in the peace and quiet of our secluded dwelling you will recover your lost happiness and spirits. The injured tone of your mind will be restored to its lost buoyancy, and you will soon cease to think of the misfortune which has occurred. Listen to me, Alice; and pardon the frankness and candour of an old and sincere friend. I know that Sir Leopold Lindorf, whom I saw for a few hours on the eve of your embarkation, is not a husband of your own selecting; I know you cannot care for him. Remember, Alice, your engagement with him will not be for a day, a month, or a year, but it will be for ever. To him alone, for the remainder of your joint lives, you must belong. His word must be your law; his will must be your pleasure. Not only does your earthly happiness depend on your fulfilling your duty to him, but your eternal felicity also. Consider all I say to you. No wealth, or pomp, or worldly honours can avail, if we are not at peace with ourselves, and with each other. Do you think that our bondage in

a state of slavery would be more bearable, were the chains which encompassed us of gold? Do you think that happiness must necessarily find its residence in gorgeous palaces? No, Alice, you do not think thus; you cannot have so greatly altered within a few short months. Virtue and contentment have still too great inducements for you, to allow you to have so much changed.

I will hope, and look forward to soon hearing from you. Surely you will not, under any circumstances, forget your old friends, who here often think of you with unalterable affection, and wish that you were away from the temptations of the world with them. Excuse me, Alice, but you will pardon the licence which I have taken ;

And believe me to be

Ever your sincerely attached,

GEORGE O'GRADY.

As soon as Alice read this letter, she sought Lady Arlingham, who, with the Marchioness,

was engaged in some matters of importance connected with her marriage. She handed it to the Countess, who, at her request, read it to her adviser, and after some little consideration, said, "My dear Alice, this man is a fool!"

"You would not say so, Lady Arlingham, if you knew him."

"Perhaps not. But surely he does not think that you are about to marry without your own and your friends' consent. Really, he advises you as if you were a baby, and unable to direct yourself. Do you agree with me, Maude?"

"Certainly. You may plainly see the man has something in contemplation for Alice in his own family. Has he sons?"

"No, Lady Cornwall," replied Alice, with trepidation; "but he has a nephew."

"A nephew is all the same. He wants you, I suppose, for his wild Irish boy. But I can tell him, we will not spare our darling Alice to the bogs of Erin. Write him a civil answer, or I will write it for you."

“As I must not be guided by his opinions, I think I had better not write until all is over.”

“That would be by far the better plan. But, Alice, you make me almost laugh when you so pathetically say, ‘You will not write until all is over,’ as if it was a funeral which we were arranging instead of a wedding. Cheer up, dearest, and never mind this prating, Methodistical adviser, who takes the liberty of writing sermons for your benefit whenever you may think proper to enter into the holy bands of wedlock. Now, I think, we may congratulate you on the completion of a *trousseau* as magnificent and well-appointed as any subject in the British realm could desire. Your jewels have all been sent to Lindorf House, and I dare say at your next meeting with Sir Leopold, he will present them.”

Alice tried to look satisfied, and, when she had left the room, Lady Cornwall exclaimed:—

“What a stupid thing it was, Adelaide, that she was allowed to receive this letter. Her

determination seemed to be at first not a little shaken."

"Yes; but thanks to you that danger was soon overcome. All her Irish letters excepting this came to me from the Dudleys, according to my directions."

"Were there many?"

"Yes. But I gave her all excepting one, which seemed suspicious. I locked it up securely."

"Show it me, Adelaide."

"I will; but I think we had better burn it."

"I will read it first, and see how true Portland has continued; if so be it comes from him."

"Here it is. The hand-writing on the cover resembles Alfred's, which first aroused my fears."

Lord Portland to Alice Beauclerk.

For pity's sake, my Alice, do not condemn me for thus daring to break through your commands, until you hear my vindication of my

conduct. I cannot refrain from writing to you, for reasons which I shall tell you. You may be displeased, but you must forgive me. Letters which have now reached me give me tidings that a rumour of my intended marriage with Lady Leonora Saville is afloat; and that the information bears the stamp and appearance of truth, as from my mother it has directly come. I would not have heeded the news, but that the kind and faithful correspondent who has communicated it to me, has also vouched for the sincerity of another detail of much deeper import to me than the former ever can be. He says, Alice, that he has seen——you, even you, my best-beloved. He has met you in the gay and brilliant world of fashion, surrounded by the brightest and noblest in the land, encompassed by the care and friendship of the purest and the fairest in the creation. Believe me, light of my soul, that joy, unbounded joy, was the sole passion that I experienced as I read, and pondered on the words, which minutely recorded those particulars; and I learned, too,

that my Alice, as constant as when I left her, was unmoved and unmindful of the adulations which were unceasingly offered at the shrine of her beauty, and seemed as if her thoughts were far away, with those who, though absent, were not indifferent or forgotten. You may imagine the feelings which those tidings gave birth to in my mind. You may fancy my transcendant happiness. Away from country, friends, kindred, and a still dearer object;—in a strange and foreign land, surrounded by beings whom I could not like (though inhabitants of England, and persons who had endeavoured arduously to win my regard and confidence);—separated from all that had power to interest me, picture to yourself, dearest and best, the felicity of that moment when thus I read of you. But, after this rapturous announcement, came the corroding and cankering fear, that the untrue and unfounded tale of my supposed marriage had met your ear. My friend assured me that it had; but he was not merciful enough to tell me how you bore it. Alice, a deep game is playing

against our happiness ; more I cannot say. The words of my informant have disclosed to me artifices beyond conception. You have been duped, but by whom duty forbids me to tell. Alice, be unmindful of every thing but my unceasing love. Hearken not to the smoothest or most plausible devices which may be woven to estrange us from each other ; and remember your vow to “preserve your faith, as long as I shall keep mine.” I will not doubt you, but exist in hope until that return which I know to be not far distant. Our engagement is known to my mother. I myself told her of it ; therefore be more strictly on your guard with her, as well as with Lady Arlingham, for their thoughts are known to each other.

Alice, farewell !

“ Adelaide, how fortunate we have been in thus suppressing this romantic and undutiful epistle ! Had Alice seen it, our scheme and reputations were for ever gone. I know the ministry totter in their present precarious situa-

tion; they must fall. Pettigrew's return will be immediate, and Alice must be married directly. Sir Leopold but waits her pleasure; she must consent to fix upon a day."

"She must, Maude. We must not lose a moment, for I almost dread that Portland will not wait the termination of the ambassage. His fears once roused, he will not brook delay. Within a week, at farthest, the nuptials must be celebrated."

"Without a doubt they must. Do you prepare the bride, while I hasten to Sir Leopold, who is at present in the house, waiting to catch a glimpse of his unkind one."

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ So soon, so very soon, must it take place? Oh, dearest Lady Arlingham, plead for me, and gain a little longer time.”

“ I cannot, Alice. Sir Leopold is impatient at the delays which have already arisen, and has commissioned me to tell you that he cannot wait or grant another day. Surely, as you have consented to be his, it matters but little to you that the marriage is accomplished now or at a later period.”

“ It does, for I had hoped to have acquired resignation to my fate ere I was summoned to profess it at the altar. It seems to me but little short of sacrilege to swear obedience, love, and

Honour to a being for whom my real feelings
Fall but little short of positive aversion."

"I should feel pained beyond conception,
Alice, if such a sentiment was heard by any ears
but mine. You should not thus give way to
feelings so bitter and ungenerous."

"You know each thought within my breast;
therefore to you I speak in confidence what I
should blush to think was even dreamt of by
another. From my heart I pity the unhappy
man who wins a wife with affections such as
mine. You must bear with me, my dear friend.
For this once listen to my words, when they
detail the language of my soul; for I must
never after this hour give way to it as now I do.
Soon, indeed, must the outward semblance of
affection be put on, to guard the inward feelings
of disgust from being apparent to the world;
soon must Alice Beauclerk learn how to conceal
the truth, with the polluting and disfiguring veil
of hypocrisy."

"How many, Alice, are there in the world,
bright luminaries of virtue, talent, and accom-

plishments, who, like you, have proved the deceptive turpitude of man, and have hidden under the mask of seeming indifference the real and harrowing arrows of despair. Behold them rising above their tribulations and despondency, casting off the burthen of their blighted hopes, and becoming in the end the ornaments and patterns of conjugal and maternal felicity ! Look round you, dearest and most loved Alice, and amongst the crowds of pure and distinguished matrons whom we each day and hour associate with, see how few there are who enter on the married state of existence the wives of those to whom their first and only vows of love were plighted. Love is a beautiful and a fascinating delusion of our young fancy ; it is an unreal and an unsubstantial charm, wherewith to blind and ruin us ; it is a theme on which to think, but not to live.”

“ Be it so, Lady Arlingham. The world, and the world’s ways, are known to you. To me, uninitiated and inexperienced, I seem to be wilfully hurrying to my ruin and misery. But

you shall not say that I am ungrateful, and obstinately opposed to what you have planned as best for me ; and I give myself to you, to do with me as you may think proper. I never will again thus grieve you, by alluding to my disinclination, I might say abhorrence, of the coming event."

" I knew, Alice, your reason and sense of right would aid me in Sir Leopold's cause. On this day week, I will tell him that you have consented to have the matter ended."

" Yes ; but I think——. No matter, now ; my thoughts are immaterial."

" No, Alice ; you should not speak thus. What do you think, my love ?"

" Why, you said, to soften the decision to my hearing, that on this day the matter (meaning my repugnance and misery) would be ended. I thought at the moment that they would be but commencing."

" And was that all, Alice ?"

" It was, my kind friend. But I have pro-

mised you to refrain from thus speaking, and, if I can help myself, thus thinking too."

Lady Arlingham withdrew; but Alice was not to be alone, for almost immediately Sir Leopold entered, and, approaching her with an attempt at tenderness, exclaimed,

"My dear Miss Beauclerk, I sincerely thank you for the attentive kindness with which you have conceded to my wishes and prayers for an immediate union. You know the hacknied though applicable old saying, that 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' and have most generously ended the term of my probation."

Alice did not reply, for she did not know what to say; but she looked miserable and confused. He seated himself by her side on the sofa, and made a fruitless exertion to take her hand. He was particularly well dressed; his new wig was most carefully arranged, and his beautifully formed new teeth enabled him to smile with perfect security.

"My dear girl, now that I may presume to

address you by the endearing term of Alice, I have much to say, and much to arrange with respect to our nuptials. Lady Arlingham has hinted to me your disinclination to any allusions about it; but between you and I there cannot be any delicacy to be observed with respect to the settling the various minutiae necessarily attendant on a marriage such as ours should be."

Poor Alice bowed; and Sir Leopold, thinking it sufficient encouragement, continued:—

"I understand that Lady Cornwall presents your *trousseau*, and that it is a becoming one for Lady Lindorf. My part concerning the family jewels, I flatter myself, has been executed as it should be; and I cannot call to my remembrance any thing that has been forgotten or neglected."

Another bow, and Sir Leopold recommenced:—

"Our marriage articles and settlements, which, of course, you have read, now only remain to have our signatures affixed; and I

trust you think that your jointure, pin-money, &c., have all and each been liberal.”

Again Alice inclined her head, and again Sir Leopold spoke:—

“ His Grace the Archbishop of York has been kind enough to give me his promise of uniting us. He is a relation of mine, for his grand uncle’s wife was my grand aunt—an excellent woman, and named Margaret Lindorf. The élite of society will honour us with their presence; and if I am not mistaken, we shall have every requisite attention paid to our rank and situation by the Countess; whose magnificent taste will, I am sure, be brought into action on the important occasion. From this I propose our journeying to Lindorf, the ancient and venerable inheritance of the Lindorfs, who have there resided for nearly six centuries. My tenantry will, according to ancient custom, celebrate the event by feasting and rejoicing; and we shall, with the society of each other, be enabled to pass a month in the seclusion of the country, before we return to our mansion here.

I hope, Alice, this hasty sketch accords with your wishes."

Alice said something which might be yes or no, or any thing that her admirer might please to fancy it. He, however, imagined it to be an affirmative, and raising her now feeble hand to his lips, he kissed it, and looked amiable.

"I have written out a copy of the requisite form to be observed in noting our marriage in the papers of the day; I will leave it for your private perusal and approval."

He handed this important document to Alice, who took it just as Lady Arlingham (who thought that they had been together sufficiently long) entered, and destroyed the interesting *tête-à-tête*.

"Really, Sir Leopold, you, and Alice look so happy, that I fear I have disturbed your agreeable interview. But, though you both may not imagine that you have been a moment together, I assure you, you have been here closeted an immense time."

“Is it possible, Lady Arlingham? But we have been so happily engaged, that time flew we knew not how. Alice has been consenting and listening to all my arrangements, which fortunately seem to give her perfect satisfaction. Do you think, Lady Arlingham, that four weeks will be too long for us to remain at Lindorf?”

“Not if you think well of it, Sir Leopold. I know that Alice will be happy any where with you.”

“I am perfectly convinced of it. But you know we owe something to the world, and our rank in society—the London season will be rapidly passing away, and I wish to introduce Lady Lindorf, and present her before it ends.”

“Of course, Sir Leopold, you are quite right in your ideas on every subject. Alice must be presented, and I hope that she will allow me to have that pleasure.”

“Decidedly, Lady Arlingham. You will be the person most fitted for such an important business. As the friend of Miss Beauclerk you

will be the friend of Lady Lindorf. I cannot say how proud I feel to receive such a wife from such hands."

"Not prouder I assure you, Sir Leopold, than I shall be to bestow her on such a man as you are. I think the rank of Lady Lindorf is not to be despised, even by an Alice Beauclerk."

As Lady Arlingham thus engaged the attention of Sir Leopold, she gave Alice time and opportunity to escape unperceived from the room, and quit the presence and society of the noble Lindorfs' representative; who, overwhelmed with delight, ran from one subject to another until he became breathless, and his fair auditress completely stupified, and heartily sick of her cousin's pedigree and pretensions.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE bridal day of Alice Beauclerk rose unclouded. The skilful aid of Lady Arlingham attired her as befitted her own position in society, as well as that to which she soon was to belong; and nothing seemed wanting to adorn the sacrifice which was about to be offered up at the shrine of Avarice and Vanity.

Sir Leopold was right when he affirmed, that the Countess would be sure to pay every requisite attention towards the gracing of his nuptials; every thing was done, and nothing left undone. The most select and fashionable attendance that her Ladyship's supreme power could command; the most splendid and magnificent *déjeûné* that wealth could insure; and every other necessary

observance of mode and etiquette charmed and gratified the enraptured Baronet, who, critically dressed, and appointed for the occasion, seemed on that happy morn more satisfied with himself than ever.

“A few hours more, Alice, and all this agitation will be over,” said Lady Cornwall, as she endeavoured to console the wretched girl, who sat silent and motionless, unmindful of the bustle of both her noble friends. “You must remember, my sweet girl, that this allowable timidity is but the usual attendant on occasions like the present.”

“Lady Cornwall, dearest friend, I doubt did ever bride experience feelings similar to mine.”

“Foolish girl, Alice, that you are to seem so ignorant. Why, all maidens put on the semblance of them at least. A brazen, unconcerned bride can never be an interesting one.”

“Would that my sentiments were feigned.— Oh, Lady Cornwall! the sin of perjury is a foul and a revolting one. I loathe myself, for soon it will be upon my soul; soon will it be en-

graven on my heart, and stamped upon my brain."

"Hush, dear girl, you know not what you say. You will, I know, ere long redeem the pledge which you will give this day. Your soft and gentle heart will soon appreciate the husband you have won; and in each action and each thought identify itself with his."

"O that it may! May this awful and terrific commencement of my married life be the sole sorrow which I shall have to lament during my existence in it; and may I be preserved from the ills which surround me!—Lady Arlingham, I am ready now to attend you."

She arose, and taking the arms of her supporters, was soon transported to the Church where the expectant bridegroom awaited her.

If the assembled groups of youth, beauty, rank, and fashion, as well as the myriads of less favoured mortals who, from an humble distance, viewed the magnificent cortège, could read the heart of Alice as she stood beside Sir Leopold, how would they pity and commiserate the being whom they gazed upon with wonder and admi-

ration. During the ceremony her heart was with her thoughts, far away from the scene which was enacting. Memory brought her to the years of her early happiness—the friends of her early youth were before her—the kind and loving voices of departed excellence were in her ear—the warm and tender pressure of fervent affection was on her hand—the last and agonizing glances of expiring friendship met her mind's eye; and, as the horrifying thrill of anguishing remembrance crept through her veins, a shudder, painful and severe, passed over her chilled and drooping form, and brought her back to the still more terrible reality.

Again her fevered mind wandered. She saw, as it were, a bridal group similar to that which was surrounding her. She saw the bridegroom, and she knew the bride. Alice Beauclerk happy, transcendently happy was the blest and favoured maid, who gave unto her Alfred her vows of virgin tenderness and constancy. His was the voice which swore to love and to protect her; her's was the soul and tongue which felt and

uttered the response. It was Portland's hand which placed the symbol of the never-ending union on her finger; it was on his head and upon her's that the blessing was pronounced. Suddenly the attendants rose from the humble and supplicating attitude of prayer. The confused and sobered voices of congratulation struck upon her oral nerves—she raised her eyes—they scanned the group—they rested on her husband—the features which met her glance restored her to reason and recollection. Her fleeting vision had in a second passed away—her mockery of happiness had fled—Alice was indeed the bride; but the fancied bridegroom had, with the beautiful delusion, vanished. She was married, and for ever after she was miserable.

A feeling almost equal to that of suffocation rose within her as Sir Leopold seized her hand, and proudly drawing it within his arm, led her down the aisle to his new and brilliant equipage, which was in attendance, to convey her back to Lady Arlingham's. The business of disrobing, and the attentions of her hostess and her bride-

maids, allowed Alice time to think and ruminate upon the part which for evermore she was doomed to act. The gay and laughing voices of young and joyous maidenhood sounded harshly to the suffering Alice. She could not speak or answer her kind young friends, as they spoke in friendship and affection to her. All was a chaos. She heard not the purport of their converse until one, a blooming, gladsome girl, exclaimed—

“But we have not had time to think on any thing to-day except your marriage, dearest Lady Lindorf. Do you know that the ministry have resigned, and papa is out of office?”

“Indeed,” replied another, as gaysome and as lovely. “And, are the Tories out; I guessed something of the sort had happened, for the men were whispering together all this morning on some engrossing topic. Lord Sandilans had not time to speak a syllable even to me.”

“O, by the way, papa says he would not be surprised if Lord Sandilans went out as ambassador to Russia. You know Lord Pettigrew will be instantly recalled.”

“Will he? But did you hear that Lord Portland has declared the rumour of his marriage Lady Leonora was all a hoax? My brother, Major Baring, whom you know is Lord Portland’s most particular friend, wrote me word that his Lordship totally disclaims all knowledge of the matter.”

Alice heard no more—she fainted. Long was it ere her senses were recalled. Lady Arlingham, nearly distracted at the occurrence, though ignorant of the cause, knew not what to do. The guests put it down to agitation, excitement, &c. But Lady Cornwall, who had been inquiring into the particulars, at once guessed the real cause. For once her proud and stubborn heart relaxed, and she felt, with something akin to contrition, the wickedness of her schemes towards the devoted Alice. She drew the Countess apart from her young guests, who were endeavouring to resuscitate the bride, and communicated her suspicions of Alice having discovered the fraud which had been practised.

She did not wait for her victim’s recovery,

hastened away, fearful of encountering the looks of agony which she felt that she had caused.

Sir Leopold, unconscious of the state in which she was, remained impatiently waiting her reappearance. He strutted about in the utmost self-complacency, and from time to time could not refrain from taking a peep at his newly appointed travelling carriages, which were in readiness at the door. The crowds of idle loiterers who waited around them, in order to get a view of those who were to enter them, contributed but a little to increase his pride and happiness. The arms upon the equipages had been executed to his utmost approbation, and were as shining as the Lindorf pride could wish them to be; and the delight of seeing the new additions which they had received made him scarcely able to repress his sentiments. The discourses of those around him were unheard, and he was hardly conscious of their presence. Pride, vanity, folly, and conceit had done their utmost, and was unable to contain one iota more of any

of those ingredients than what on that memorable day puffed up his empty head and mind.

At last Alice entered, and the arm of Lady Arlingham trembled as she strove to support her. The brilliant flush of excitement and intense agitation, which had been upon her cheek during the celebration of the ceremony, had faded away, and she was ashy pale. Every exquisitely modelled limb shook as if an ague fit convulsed it, while her hard and painful breathing denoted the anguish which was rending her. She strove to answer the inquiries of those who, unacquainted with her source of sorrow, felt for her agitated appearance ; but she could not—the words died unheard upon her lips, and scalding tears of bitter misery followed the vain attempt she made to speak her thanks.

Sir Leopold approached her with one of his winning smiles ; and, taking her from the Countess, led her down stairs. The assembled spectators, struck with the resplendent beauty which, notwithstanding her intense affliction, was dazzling, looked around for the husband of so

fair a bride, for they did not imagine that Sir Leopold could possibly be him. His vanity was for a moment lowered by hearing voices near him say—

“That there rum old chap is the father, I bees thinking.”

“No, but he is the husband; I knows him to be Sir Leopold.”

“Shame then on them who sold her, poor thing. No wonder for her to look so sad and sorry like.”

Sir Leopold squeezed his little tubbish figure into the chariot as fast as he possibly could, to escape the observations which he could not be deaf to, but which certainly left him in no very enviable state of mind. The door was closed—the windows drawn up—the words of command, “All right,” were given, and Alice was driven away with misery and Sir Leopold.

CHAPTER XXVI.

UNABLE to restrain his impatience to behold his Alice, Lord Portland separated from the recalled ambassador on their landing in England, and hurried to London, hoping and expecting there to meet her. The communications of Major Baring had informed him that she had, accompanied by Lady Arlingham, returned from Fairlands to the metropolis, but that she appeared to be in delicate health, most probably caused by the excessive dissipation which she was obliged to engage in.

Unconscious of the overthrow of his hopes and anticipations, he travelled as rapidly as possible; and, hurrying to his father's house, presented himself before his mother, unexpectedly and

wished for. She, with her confidant, the mistress, had endeavoured to arrange some wherewith to deceive him, and keep him in ignorance of the part which they had borne in the transaction. But their efforts had been less and unavailing, and the Marchioness held her son before her without the slightest preparation. She knew not what to do, or how to act in the dilemma in which she found herself, and strove, by every means within her power, to parry off the disclosure which she expected.

He was in high spirits, and for a length of time he gave her hopes that for that evening at least he would not touch upon the alarming topic of his love. He inquired for numerous friends and acquaintances; he asked numberless questions concerning Lady Arlingham; he spoke of Lady Leonora, and of every thing and every body but of Alice. He evidently appeared to expect that his mother would herself introduce the theme by which his soul was engrossed, and heatedly paved the way to it. But his exer-

tions were unattended with success, and he, despite his hopes, began to distrust appearances.

“ You seem, my Alfred, to have been benefitted by your travels. You are in appearance much stronger than when we parted,” said the Marchioness, in terror at a lengthened pause which occurred after some allusions had been made to the Countess.

“ Yes, my dear mother, I am a great deal better. The correspondence of my friends has cheered me during my exile.”

Lady Cornwall felt by this allusion that the dreaded moment was coming, and she said quickly—

“ Of course. By-the-bye, your friend, Major Baring, mentioned to me that your letters were gradually becoming more cheerful as your residence in Russia was lengthening; he is a particularly pleasant person, and one who appears to be much attached to you.”

“ I am convinced of it. He was at Fairlands, was he not?”

“ Yes, he was. Alfred, that is a beautiful box

which you have in your hand; positively I must have it for my boudoir," rapidly exclaimed the Marchioness, whose heart beat violently as she heard this leading question; and she pretended to admire the bauble to conceal her extreme agitation and excessive tremor.

"It shall be yours, mother. Baring mentioned that your friend Lady Arlingham was with you during his stay at Fairlands."

"She was. But, do you know, Alfred, she is breaking; she does not look well."

"I regret to hear it. Surely she is too young and too lovely yet to feel the stern hand of Time."

"O yes; but, Alfred, we cannot be beautiful for ever."

"You should not say so at least, mother, for you look more beautiful than when I left you."

The Marchioness, notwithstanding her alarm, smiled, for her heart was still alive to flattery, and coveted it, although it came from the lips of a partial, doating child. She replied—

“ I thank you, Alfred. And, as compliments are thus circulating, I shall say as much for you.”

“ Why, mother, if I look well it is because I have been so happy. How truly does the health of the body attend upon that of the mind.”

“ I rejoice to hear you say so, my child. But, Leonora was with you, and therefore I cannot wonder at your happiness.”

“ Have done, I entreat you, mother. Leonora, amiable and dowered as she is, can never be to me aught but a cold, callous, and unfeeling acquaintance. I cannot even call her friend. My happiness and hopes of happiness are derived from causes in which she can never have an interest.”

“ Alfred, if you return to me thus unchanged and disobedient, my welcome cannot await you. Methought our parting was sufficiently demonstrative of my wishes and commands.”

“ Mother, your wishes and commands should

have been to me as laws, had they been backed by reason; but I see you are still unchanged in mind and resolution, as I am myself."

The Marchioness strove to hide, by passion, her real terror, and she exclaimed—

"If you but come to taunt me with your continued rebellion, Alfred, you had better leave this room ere you forget that I am your mother, and insult me by your words."

"Insult you! oh, mother, I should be sadly changed if such should be the case. But I will leave my fate in your hands, for you have seen my Alice."

"Your Alice, Alfred! The girl of whom you spoke to me! The girl who hath been the sole cause of our first disunion! Do you mean her?"

"Yes, mother, you well know whom I mean; my Alice, my Alice Beauclerk."

"Beauclerk, Alfred? why there is not such a being now as Alice Beauclerk."

"You cannot say so, mother; surely my

friend saw her with you at Fairlands, enjoying the confidence and love which, though deserved, you had determined to withhold."

"True, Alfred, Alice was with me; and a more lovely being I have never yet beheld."

The Earl grew pale as his mother said, "Alice was with me;" and a strange sensation of alarm pervaded him, though he felt happy and reassured at her concluding sentence; and he summoned resolution to ask—

"And, dearest mother, where is she now?"

"I have not heard from her since we parted; but Lady Arlingham tells me, that Sir Leopold mentioned to her that he thought of remaining at the family seat for some weeks at least."

"Sir Leopold! and who is he, mother?"

"Sir Leopold Lindorf, Alfred; do you not remember the pompous old bachelor, Adelaide Arlingham's friend, and would-be cousin?"

"The man with the interminable pedigree, is it? And what is he to Alice, that her movements must be guided by his?"

“Why, you seem sadly in ignorance, Alfred, of the business. Sir Leopold is her—husband.”

The speechless look of agony, with which the wretched young nobleman regarded his cruel parent, touched and penetrated even her relentless heart. He passed his cold and trembling hand across his damp and clammy forehead, on which the moisture of despair and unutterable woe had in one moment settled. He withdrew it from his aching temples, but to press it still closer and firmer to his bursting heart, which throbbed almost to breaking. His labouring breast seemed almost torn by the deep and fearful sobs which issued from it; and, as the sinful mother gazed upon her sorrowing child, she felt, for once, how bitter and galling was the ignominious bond of sin and iniquity.

She rose, and took his passive hand; she pressed it as if in affection; the pressure was unreturned. She parted the rich and glossy hair that matted lay upon his fine and manly brow; he did not heed the action. She kissed

his burning lips, but the caress was unregarded. She whispered in his senseless ear, 'My Alfred,' 'My child,' 'My darling!' But all the soothing of a mother's tenderest words were lost upon him. He sat mute and unmindful, a perfect portraiture of a stricken and broken heart, withered ere its prime, destroyed in the first bloom of its existence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ WHY, Lady Lindorf, my love, you look very pale; I remember thinking, when first I saw you, that you had the most lovely and brilliant colour I ever beheld; indeed, I thought you not unlike my great grand-aunt, Lady Lapsly, who was a famous beauty in the reign of Anne. She married Lord Lapsly, who was chamberlain to her most gracious majesty, hence our connexion and near relationship to that noble old family. Pray, my dear, take a drive to-day, and return some of your visits; you have never been out since we arrived at Lindorf.”

Alice consented; and Sir Leopold withdrew, leaving her to that worst of comforters—reflection. A deep and profound sorrow had seized

upon her, and was gradually beginning to undermine her constitution. As her husband truly remarked, she had become exceedingly pale, every trace and vestige of colour and animation had vanished; her lips were ashy white; and each movement and action betrayed the inward anguish of her soul. Sir Leopold, really kind and well-meaning, vainly endeavoured to dispel what, in the innocence of his heart, he believed to be but temporary indisposition; but the means which he used were only calculated to deepen still more her affliction. He never could be a companion, much less a husband to her. His vain and empty boastings, his displayed wealth and riches, his never-ending theme of family and pride, were so many arrows rankling in her festering mind. In vain she strove to call duty and principle to her aid; in vain she strove to rouse herself and love him; in vain she strove even to respect him. Her exertions were useless; she 'but dragged a lengthening chain,' which, each day, hour, and moment appeared more intolerable. She dreaded to ponder on

the deceit which had been so cruelly practised against her; for in doing so she but felt the strength of the affection which she bore to one of whom she dared not think—of one who was for ever torn from her. She dreaded, she knew not why, her leaving Lindorf. While there, she felt at least secure from hearing of, or meeting with, those who had ruined and destroyed her; she felt that while there she was not in danger of beholding him whom she had forsaken. She perceived that Sir Leopold was beginning to tire of the seclusion of the country; for her visible illness allowed her a feasible pretext to decline all invitations. She knew that his insatiable vanity would compel her to mingle with the fashionable world, unable as she was to enjoy it; and at each conversation she expected and dreaded an announcement of their departure. The London season was rapidly passing over, and she knew his determination to have her presented ere its close.

One evening, while enjoying the soft breezes

of a splendid spring evening in an open window, and forgetful of Sir Leopold and her miseries, Alice sat recalling past scenes to her remembrance. He, fond of wine, had tarried longer than usual after dinner; and, unmissed and unwished for by his bride, had remained drinking, until his florid countenance betokened an additional and deeper flush than Alice had ever remarked upon it before.

More disgusted from being called back to painful reality, Alice was preparing to leave the apartment, when he exclaimed—

“Don’t go, my love—I have news for you—letters from London—presentations—introduced by the Countess of Arlingham—my wife—go to-morrow—ordered carriages—do you hear, Alice, love?”——

This speech, which took many moments to deliver, was not lost to Alice. She had expected the order; but she did not dream of the abominable propensity which Sir Leopold was addicted to. He staggered and hickuped until he fell

asleep on a sofa; and allowed her opportunity to read a letter which he had brought with him.

It was a London one for her; she trembled as she caught a glimpse of the writing on the cover, and almost gasping for breath she tore it open and read:—

“ For the last, last time I address you: Alice, false and perfidious as you are, I love you; yes, love you with a true and never-ending love. The heart that you have broken still faintly beats at your remembrance; still faintly throbs as I trace the name impressed upon it. I have returned, but to know that I am wretched. Alice, I warned you against deception; I warned you against credulity. You cannot plead, in extenuation of your conduct, that you were deceived, or that I was false. You cannot dare to say that others took the love which once was mine. No, Alice, no. Tired of the absence which you yourself enforced; fickle and forgetful, you have wedded one whose only gift was

wealth—sordid, avaricious wealth. And are you happy? In the midst of pride and luxury are you content? Can you repose in peace unmindful of that being whose throbbing brain and aching heart are left as types of your inconstancy? Do you brave conscience, and set at nought remorse? Alice, do you forget me?

“I had determined never again to see you, to write to you, or to think of you. I had resolved to banish Alice and her faithlessness from my recollection; and, if perchance the image of what she once was, would intrude upon me, to ponder on her but as a vision sent to warn me of the baseness of her sex. But human resolves are vain and inutile; my projects have been discarded, and I now, for the last and only time, recal myself to your imagination and remembrance. Alice, I trust we may never meet, unless when in our after lives memory may be blunted and conscience deadened. Then, in the busy crowd of life, we may encounter one another, fearless of the effects of such a meeting, and fortified by years and experience against

ourselves. I know I could not see you the bride of another without exposing feelings which must be now for ever hidden.

“ But, enough of bitterness. Notwithstanding my wrongs, I feel and know what you will suffer as you read this letter. ‘ In my mind’s eye’ I mark the falling tear and heaving bosom. I hear the bitter sigh of anguish; and I am almost tempted to cast the paper to the flames. But I must write; I must tell you how I feel, and then bid to you a long and last adieu. I shall leave home, country, and friends, and in some distant land remain until you will be forgotten. May you preserve the serenity and peace which I have lost; and never be compelled to think Alice Lindorf less happy than was Alice Beauclerk !

“ I do not seek or wish to intrude myself upon you, or to excite in you sentiments which would be unworthy of a wife. Far would it be from me to strive to lessen the affection which should exist in the married state, or mar the bright prospects of futurity which may now open before

you. Sir Leopold is now your husband; Portland must be nothing; and I know too well your mind and disposition to doubt their rectitude. Alice, farewell! As I have written my heart has softened; and I now feel for you but forgiveness. If this letter should pain or offend you, pardon me, and attribute as its cause the overthrow of my human felicity. One wish yet permit me to indulge in, it is the last favour I shall ever ask of you—Alice, forget me.”

Alice felt, as she concluded reading, that her cup of misery was full to overflowing. She hurried from the room unmindful of the still sleeping Sir Leopold, and rushing to her chamber gave way to torrents of tears. They had been the first which she had shed since she had ceased to be Alice Beauclerk; and they calmed and quieted her overstrained and agonized feelings. Long was it ere she was interrupted by her husband, who continued sleeping off the effects of his debauch, while his wretched wife remained a prey to anguish and remorse. Ere she retired

to rest, she committed this last record of Portland to the flames, and felt, when she had done so, that she had performed her duty. Sleep was that night denied to her; but, on the entrance of Sir Leopold, she was glad to feign it, in order to conceal her swollen eyes and still visible agitation; as also the horror and disgust which she experienced towards him.

In the morning, however, she found that Sir Leopold was fully determined upon quitting Lindorf for London. All hints and entreaties on her part were unavailing to change his resolution; and she found that the pliant conciliating lover had been quickly altered to the positive and determined husband. The excesses of the preceding evening were repeated; and again was poor Alice glad to seek, in the privacy of her room, a reprieve from the unpleasing society of the intoxicated Baronet. At last the day of their departure arrived, and Alice was driven, with her husband, to their splendid and magnificent residence in —— square.

Sir Leopold, proud of his transcendently lovely wife, was determined to exhibit her to the gay admiring world of fashion, with which he loved to mingle. She, wretched and miserable, instinctively shrunk from the public admiration with which she was at all times greeted; and, faint and weary, was compelled to undergo the continued and never-ending system of dissipation, which Sir Leopold so much valued and delighted in.

Her first meeting with Lady Arlingham was fraught with pain and constraint to both; the Countess, from her discovered duplicity, and Alice, from her feelings of indignation and disgust at the part which her ladyship had acted towards her. But the soft and gentle heart of Alice was unable to retain wrath or displeasure, and the sophistry of the fascinating Countess soon paved the way to a reconciliation. On the subject of Lord Portland both were equally silent; and his name or return was, as if by mutual agreement, never touched upon.

Lady Cornwall, confined by the extreme illness of her lord, was happy to catch at any excuse for avoiding the presence of one whom she had so cruelly wronged; and Alice too felt the necessity of being to her as a stranger. Sir Leopold, however, by his own assiduities atoned for the want of visiting on the part of the ladies, and was incessantly tormenting the Marchioness (who could not endure him) with his unwished-for presence and inquiries.

Lady Arlingham was to present Alice at the approaching Drawing-room, and her appearance was to be marked by every magnificence which the wealth and rank of Sir Leopold entitled his bride to. Lady Arlingham saw the evident dislike of Alice to the ceremony; and endeavoured by her influence to induce Sir Leopold to postpone it until her health and spirits became renovated. But he, like all stupid, silly people, was positive in the greatest extent, and would not be talked or argued into losing the eclat of introducing such a wife. He insisted, and debated on the matter, until Alice was glad, for

peace sake, to sacrifice her own inclinations, and obey his wishes. Her unwilling assent being obtained, the Countess and her husband forthwith set about preparations, in which she took no interest.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE day on which the Drawing-room was to be held arrived. Alice, arrayed with almost regal magnificence, remained unmindful of the labours of Mathews and Lady Arlingham's woman, who, superintended by her mistress, assisted at the toilet of the bride. Sir Leopold, in a continued flurry, insisted upon directing and advising in every particular, notwithstanding the entreaties of the Countess that he would leave all to her. "Alice's train was too short; a great deal too short.—The Lindorfs were always famous for the length and elegance of their trains.—Her feathers were not proper feathers for a Lady Lindorf.—She should wear all the family diamonds, the splendid Lindorf diamonds.—She

ought to put on a little rouge; she was a great deal too pale: his honoured mother, the beautiful Lady Lindorf, always rouged when going to a Drawing-room. The Lindorfs were noted for their brilliant complexions."

But not all his endeavours succeeded; Alice would not rouge, and Sir Leopold was most extremely angry at her determination. However, as the day was a broiling one, and his own cheeks quite blooming enough to make up for that deficiency in his wife, he thought it better to give up the debate, and keep himself cool.

The crowd gathered together as usual to witness the scene was immense; and as Sir Leopold's carriage crept slowly along in the line of equipages, he felt himself much elated by the encomiums which the beauty of his wife drew from the eager spectators; and he felt that he could almost forgive her want of colour and animation.

The carriage was quitted; all difficulties and obstacles surmounted; and Alice was in the presence of royalty, and presented. For a

second a bright and luminous glow tinged her cheek, and lighted up her countenance; and never, in the days of her freshest bloom and happiness, did she look more lovely. But as rapidly as the crimson of excitement had sprung up, as rapidly did it vanish, and was succeeded by the marble whiteness of affliction. The eyes of her courtly sovereign and his noble attendants were steadfastly regarding her; and, as Alice moved away, their undisguised admiration fell upon her ear. Embarrassed and confused, she tottered, and would have fallen, but for the Countess, who endeavoured to support her through the crowd. At that instant Alice raised her eyes, and they were met by the softened, sorrowing gaze of Lord Portland, who, transfixed with horror at the altered appearance of her he so passionately loved, saw in a moment what her sufferings had been, and forgave her. In a moment he was by her side; her arm was within his, and separated from Sir Leopold and the Countess by the throng; they were together, and this their first sad bitter meeting.

was unwitnessed. The trembling Alice scarcely breathed as the tender glances of her lover rested on her. He spoke, but his words struck coldly on her heart, for they were unlike those of former times. She turned to answer them, but her tongue refused to do its office, when she beheld a faint, forced smile, for an instant, play upon his lip, and heard his rich and mellowed voice faltering as he strove to call her by that name which now was hers, and which she so much hated.

Many, many moments did they stand together alone, in the midst of that brilliant and dazzling assemblage which surrounded them, heedless of the numbers that passed and repassed, unmindful of all save the overwhelming feelings which overpowered them. Silent, abstracted, and motionless, the Earl and his companion were at last roused by the husky voice of Sir Leopold, who, descrying them as he imagined waiting for him, approached with visible delight shining from his broad unmeaning face, and exclaimed,—

“ My dear Lord Portland, is it possible I see you here so kindly taking care of Lady Lindorf? Of course you heard she was my wife, and kindly undertook to guard her for me.”

The Earl muttered something in reply, and Sir Leopold said to him—

“ Oh ! you are so kind, my Lord ; I must, however, introduce you to Lady Lindorf ; allow me, Alice, my love, to present my most particular friend Lord Portland.”

Lord Portland bowed to Alice, and Alice tried to return it with seeming indifference ; while her husband hurried her off to her carriage, Lady Arlingham having left him before his return to seek Alice. In their progress, which was necessarily slow, Sir Leopold continued talking with increasing volubility to his silent companions. He had not seen Lord Portland since his return, and was therefore loud in his expressions of delight at thus unexpectedly meeting him.

“ I do not know whether you heard, my Lord,

that I called every day since my arrival in town at your father's, both to know how he was getting on, as likewise to pay my respects to you."

Lord Portland declared his knowledge on the interesting matter; and his confused manner was not observed by the facetious little baronet, who added—

"You were quite surprised, no doubt, my Lord, to read in the papers an account of my marriage—quite a surprise to you, was it not?"

The Earl stuttered and stammered out some answer indicative of not having heard of it until his return.

"Not heard of it until your return, my Lord? how extremely odd; why, I read it in The Morning Post, The Morning Chronicle, The Times, The Herald, and, in fact, every paper at the time. I sent an account to all, written by myself, that I should be sure of a proper and authentic insertion."

“ I scarcely ever read newspaper accounts in that way,” replied Lord Portland, and his lip quivered as he spoke.

“ There you are wrong, my Lord, excuse me for saying so ; but of course you heard of the matter directly on your return, from some one or other ?”

“ From my mother,” answered the wretched young man, who had caught a glimpse of Alice’s countenance at the moment, and perceived burning tears of misery forcing their way rapidly down her cheeks.

“ A very proper person,” replied Sir Leopold. “ She knew all the particulars ; she was quite up to the business. I suppose she told you it was quite a love match ?”

Much to the relief of Alice, some person intercepted the Earl, and drew him for a few moments away from her side. Added to the anguish of her mind, she was aware that every word of Sir Leopold’s nonsensical discourse had been overheard by numbers who were around them ; and she saw the ill concealed laughter of

a group of young men immediately before her. She implored of Sir Leopold to get her home as soon as possible ; and he, seeing the really harassed manner with which she spoke, effected her passage to her carriage, in which she had been placed, when Lord Portland hurried towards her, to apologize to Sir Leopold for having left his lady in the uncereemonious manner which he did. He spoke to Sir Leopold, but did not look at Alice, who had thrown herself back in the carriage to avoid again seeing him. Sir Leopold warmly shook hands with him, and added—

“ Remember, my Lord, Lady Lindorf and I shall be, at all times, delighted to see you ; I assure you, you will find Lindorf House changed for the better since it received a mistress. Will you dine with us to-morrow ? ”

“ I cannot, Sir Leopold, I am engaged. ”

“ Well, the next day. ”

“ If I possibly can I will, ” was the reply which Alice heard ; and she felt ashamed to confess to herself, that the reply gratified her.

“ Nice fellow that, my love,” said the happy Sir Leopold, as the carriage drove slowly off. “ When you know him, Alice, as well as I do, you will admire him, I am assured.”

Alice falteringly replied, “ I hope so;” and her talkative husband continued,—

“ I should like, Alice, that you would make our house agreeable to him. If he was a roué I should not like to have him; but he is an excellent, well-behaved young man, not given to love making, or falling in love. He is quite a safe person.”

Alice coloured, and looked out of the window; and Sir Leopold continued, not minding her,—

“ You looked remarkably well to-day, Alice. His Majesty complimented you exceedingly: you should have been very proud, for, besides being Lady Lindorf, with all those magnificent jewels blazing about you, you were reckoned the most beautiful woman that has been presented these twenty years. Indeed, it is a matter of doubt to me if there has been a handsomer person in that room since the introduction

of my great-grand aunt, Lady Marriott, who was a Lindorf, and reckoned by George the First to be the brightest gem in his crown.”

Alice was not sorry that soon after the delivery of this eloquent speech the carriage stopped at Lindorf House, and gave her an opportunity of separating from the self-satisfied and truly happy Sir Leopold, even for an hour.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ALICE purposely avoided meeting Lady Arlingham for some days after the Drawing-room. She feared and dreaded that of necessity the Earl would be mentioned; and she felt alarmed lest the sharp and shrewd Countess would discover the undiminished love which still enthralled her. She dreaded, yet wished for one, and only one interview with him. She longed to exculpate herself from the charges which he had brought against her; and she longed to hear him pronounce to her his forgiveness ere they were separated for ever.

But Alice was not aware of the hazardous and dangerous ordeal through which she was obliged to pass ere she effected those projects which she

proposed. She did not think that while she was suing for the pardon of her lover, she was forgetting her duty towards her husband. She did not dream of wrong when she earnestly hoped and wished that opportunity would be granted to her, in order to dispel those doubts of her fidelity which were implanted in the mind of the Earl; and far was it from her heart to harbour an idea derogatory to her own innocence, or against the honour of him whom she was bound to love and to obey.

But a feeling akin to horror pervaded her as she beheld Sir Leopold; each moment did the disgust, which she could not repel, rise still stronger in her mind. It baffled all the reasonings of propriety and duty; and she found that to be for ever with him would be impossible. It seemed as if the resolves which she had formed to respect him, and to esteem him, had vanished at the one hurried interview with the idol of her soul; and each look, word, and action was involuntarily an odious and revolting comparison between them. Unaware of the deceitfulness

of her heart, and the danger of her opinions, she forgot all but the hopes of that interview in which her truth was to be proved, and that forgiveness sealed, on which her future peace depended.

The half-consent given by Lord Portland to the invitation of Sir Leopold, had been by the latter received as a direct acceptance. In consequence, therefore, the baronet determined to invite a large company of his noblest friends and acquaintances to meet him; but Alice, on the plea of illness, contrived to overcome his plans, and induce him to change for once his resolution.

“ Yes, Alice,” said he, “ I think you are not well enough to entertain a large company as they should be received in my house, therefore I shall only ask Sir Francis Fabric, a most particular friend of mine, and a man of excellent connexions; indeed the Fabrics rank next to the Lindorfs in the age of their patent; besides, the baronet’s grand-uncle was married to my grand-aunt; so you see we are connected.”

At that moment Alice did not care if Sir Leopold was the poorest and humblest commoner in the land; and she allowed him to trace his relationships as he pleased; and he continued,—

“ I think it better to be candid with you, Alice, my love, because I know from the affection which you feel for me, that you will not be annoyed at what I am about to say; but do you know that I once had an idea of marrying Sir Francis’s eldest daughter.” The worthy man stopped to see how his important disclosure was received, and thinking that Alice looked unhappy at it, he tried to console her, by adding—

“ But, of course, that was long before I knew you, my love. The girl preferred running away with some low scoundrel, not worth two-pence.”

Alice sighed at the happy change in the fortune of Miss Fabric; and the poor innocent Sir Leopold imagined it was at the knowledge of his having loved any one besides her; and he,

endeavouring to appear tender and sentimental, continued,—

“Don’t fret about the matter, Alice, I was a fool to think of the girl; surely, my love, I would not be angry with you if I found out that I was not your first love.”

Lady Lindorf coloured, and her husband exclaimed, laughing,—

“Ah, you sly rogue, I remember the little affair between you and that Major Baring. Ah! Alice, you should give me that fellow’s portrait.”

Alice could not repress a faint smile at the happy mistake of the baronet; and he, rubbing his chubby, freckled, little fat hands together, exclaimed—

“Ah! my Lady Lindorf, I can tell you, that if he came to this house I should not like it much; for instance, supposing that my young friend, Lord Portland, had been an adorer of yours, and had sent you his picture, and that you had kissed it over and over for a thousand times, do you think I would ask him here as a

friend and intimate? Ah! no, no; I am too cunning a chap for that."

"I wish, Sir Leopold, you would send to know how Lord Cornwall is to-day," replied the absolutely shivering Alice, to whom the words of her husband had been as two-edged swords.

He delighted to have something to do; immediately determined to make the inquiry in person, and leave Alice to herself.

But as the longest term must be ended, and the longest day come to a close, so did the apparently interminable space between the drawing-room and the day appointed for Lord Portland to dine at Lindorf House decrease, until the appointed hour for dinner arrived. Alice, her cheeks flushed with agitation, and by turns trembling as if in an ague, or burning under the flaming hand of fever, united in alternate fear and hope, without hearkening to the dialogue of the prosy baronets, who, wrapped up in themselves, did not notice the excitement under which the lady of the mansion was suffering. At last the door was opened, and some person entered

the room; but the swimming eyes of the bride were unable to discern whom it was that had arrived. But a second had not elapsed when a voice, replying to Sir Leopold, told her trembling heart that Lord Portland was near her. By degrees her agitation became less, until she was able to look towards the group that in a distant window were descanting upon some unimportant topic. The Earl was standing almost opposite to her, and she fancied that his eyes were studiously averted from her. He was listening to Sir Leopold's account of his relationship with some titled friend, when dinner was announced, and she was barely conscious that she leaned upon his arm, in her descent to the dining-room.

After, however, summoning up fortitude and strength of mind to the conflict between love and remorse, she was enabled to suppress her feelings, and even occasionally look to where Portland was seated, as equally wretched as was she.

Sir Leopold, pompous and ridiculous as he

always was, was highly incensed at what he considered to be coldness and restraint on the part of Alice towards his guests. He was most particularly anxious to be considered as an intimate with the Earl, who had, however, always shrunk from his proffered friendship before his departure for Russia: and now that for the first time in his existence he had consented to come to his house, he was almost maddened at the formal and reserved manner of his wife, whose usual winning and graceful affability made her an object of admiration to all her visitants. As dinner progressed, Alice became more and more composed; and though she contrived to avoid directing her discourse to the Earl, her husband became gradually more reconciled to her manner, and hopeful that ere the close of the evening she might evince some degree of animation.

Lord Portland saw plainly the misery of Alice's lot. He saw her forced placidity, unable to control the inward workings of her troubled mind. He marked the instinctive shuddering which evinced itself each time that her husband

addressed her; and he read in her saddened and altered countenance the ravages of grief and sorrow.

His unaltered love burst forth with redoubled vehemence as he thus beheld her whom above the world he loved. His heart yearned still more than ever to that sinking and bewitching form whose image was engraven on his soul, and he felt tempted to snatch her to his bosom, and bear her from the monster who had robbed him of her. But, as her attenuated hand would press the brow which so madly burned, the type of her abhorred and never-ending union would glance upon his sight, and warn him that thoughts like those within him were but *sin*.

As Alice rose to leave the room, he advanced quickly to the door; and, as she passed, his eye caught her's; it was instantly cast down, but not before he had read that the assumed composure of the last hours had passed, and that her tears were rapidly falling.

He returned to the seat from which he had risen, absorbed by the conflicting emotions which

struggled within his breast. He was oppressed and bowed down by the weight of his affliction, and unable to remain in the presence of Sir Leopold, he, as soon as he could venture to leave the room, quitted it, determined to open his overburdened mind to Alice, and then tear himself for ever from her.

She had sunk into a chair, and had become comparatively calm before the entrance of the Earl. She guessed that he would follow her, and she had exerted herself to appear composed. He approached her, and resting his arm upon the back of her seat, remained silently regarding her. Aware of his presence, she turned towards him, but the fixed and melancholy expression of his countenance obliged her to resume her former position, and she covered her face with her hands.

But one of them was soon withdrawn, and with a touch that thrilled throughout her frame. She did not withdraw it, for her pure and stainless mind saw nought of impropriety in the action; and she once again listened to the deep-

toned voice of former times as it murmured to her ear 'Alice.' She did not reply until again he whispered 'Alice.'

And she answered, 'Lord Portland.'

He dropped the hand which he had held, and said, "I forgot that in addressing you, the term of other times should be forsaken; and that Lady Lindorf is now your name and title. Pardon me, but the appellation is so strange a one, that memory often fails me when applying it to you."

"My name is changed indeed, as I am myself," replied she; "but I cannot mean that you should think so, Alfred."

"Alice, you must think that grief hath touched my brain, when one instant I upbraid you, and the next I court your presence. But, hearken to me, for I have much to say, and my time must now be limited. Alice, forgive me, for too well I see that I have wronged you."

"Yes, Alfred, and cruelly too. And not only you have done me wrong, but those who, on my

ruin, hoped to build your fortunes and your felicity. The world might think me wrong to hold with you a conversation such as the present must be, but my own heart acquits me, and it would warn me if I were about to err."

"Alice, when last we parted I did not dread a meeting such as was ours. I did not think to see you separated from me thus; and I did not think to behold you as you are. But I have lived too long to doubt or to hope. My withered heart with you shuts out the world, and henceforth my doom must be a lone and solitary existence. With you the case is otherwise. New cares, new duties, new affections will usurp the old; and ere your prime is past, Portland and his foolish passion will be thought of but as a dream. You will be the orbit of attraction to your family and to your friends; your presence will animate and enliven all around you; your fascinations will charm even the stupid and decaying powers of existence; while I, the desolate, the forsaken, the forgotten, will drag the

lumbering length of years allotted me, in solitude and sadness; you, Alice, may and will forget, but I never can."

"Alfred, if you could read my heart and know my sufferings, you would not thus upbraid. If I have erred, if I have done you wrong, if I have forsaken you, mine was not the fault, on others should the sin be visited. Deceit, the deepest and most selfish; falsehood, the grossest and most intricate, were the toils by which I was reduced to what I am. Need I ask you, do you think that fancy or inclination led me to the irretrievable step which I have taken? Can you believe that my undirected choice fell upon the lot which now is mine. Ah! Alfred, you must think me bad indeed, if aught, save force and blackest turpitude, effected the change in Alice. If you knew what I have suffered since we parted, you would indeed pity and forgive me."

"Since I have beheld you, Alice, I believe that what you say must have been the case. But, again, when I recal to my remembrance

the warnings which I gave, the vows which I plighted, and the letter which I had written you ere my return, I must doubt the fidelity of your heart, and think that the step which you have taken was neither in ignorance nor in fear."

"The warnings which you gave were treasured in my heart until I was taught to think that you, Alfred, had been the unfaithful one. Your vows were remembered as were mine own, even after I should have forgotten them; but a letter from you since your departure I never have received. If you wrote me one, it has been withheld, or perhaps destroyed, as has been my happiness."

"You shock me, Alice, for now I dread that a mother's mistaken and most selfish love has been the sole and only cause of the ruin which has fallen on us. Dearest and most beloved of human beings, that proud and stubborn heart that robbed me of you, will know, ere long, how fruitless have been its stratagems: and how unavailing have been its deep and subtle plans, to wean from you the mind of him whose life is

withered, and whose heart is broken. Alice, henceforth my mother shall not claim a son in Portland."

As he ceased speaking he burst into tears, and sobbed long and bitterly. The voice of Alice was unheard by him in that war of passion, which shook his frame as the knowledge of his mother's duplicity came upon him; and he struck with violence those temples that almost ached to madness as he found whose was the hand which thus had wounded him.

Suddenly a carriage, driving rapidly to the door and stopping, roused the Earl, who, starting from his seat, caught Alice, for one moment, to his heart, then rushing through an opposite door, he disappeared, at the moment that Lady Arlingham entered by another, in a manner so hurried and perturbed, that Alice was in a moment brought to herself and calmed.

CHAPTER XXX.

LADY CORNWALL sat alone on the afternoon of that day in which Alice vindicated herself to the Earl. The Marchioness, ill at ease, had been ruminating on occurrences long gone by; circumstances upon circumstances of deepest import were, one by one, recalled, and memory divulged a train of sins and crimes, which the still small voice of conscience whispered should be yet atoned for. At last some sudden thought struck upon her mind, for, summoning a page, she asked, with trepidation—

“Has the Earl returned?”

An answer in the negative, was followed by her inquiring—

“Does De Cloux know whither he went?”

“ Yes, my Lady, he said his Lordship dines at Sir Leopold Lindorf’s.”

“ Ha ! is it so ? well, haste to Lady Arlingham, and give her this.”

The Marchioness rapidly traced some words, and handing the billet to the page, dismissed him with commands to hasten and await an answer.

Almost immediately the Countess arrived, and the Marchioness motioning her to be seated, exclaimed, breathlessly—

“ Adelaide, Portland has seen Alice ; he is even now with her.”

“ I am sorry for it, Maude ; but why this alarm ? why this excessive agitation ? Surely, dearest, their meeting was to be expected ; in the world where both mix they must of necessity encounter one another. This has not been their first interview ; I witnessed, in part, that dreadful meeting.”

“ But, Adelaide, surely you know well those meetings should be public. You should know that Alice and Alfred should not have time or opportunity to recal their love scenes.”

“ No, but in the presence of her husband no such opportunity will be granted.”

“ Adelaide, you are stupid, or mad, or both. Do you think that Alfred, impetuous and self-willed as he is, will brook to be so near to Alice without forming some pretext to open to her his heart. Do you think he will not hear from her the part which we have played? Do you expect that old affections will not break forth, and bring them perhaps to crimes which would be ——.”

“ Stop, Maude, breathe not that foul idea. Do not even in thought dare to form an opinion so horrible. If you knew Alice as I do, you would not dread that awful sin could ever harbour in her breast. She is too pure for vice to lay its stamp upon her.”

“ You may well preach upon morality, Adelaide, it well becomes a being such as you to tell me of that unreal virtue, or to descant upon a woman's faith. If I did not know *you* so well, I might perhaps believe your words. I once knew and loved a person young and fair like

Alice. She seemed to love me too. I took her to my heart; I brought her into the bosom of my family; she was to me as a sister; I coveted for her the brotherly affections of my husband; I heaped on her the rarest and most costly gifts; and, Adelaide, she, like a viper, turned upon me, robbed me of the love which, as a fond and doting wife, I claimed, and stung me to the very soul. Adelaide, is that tale real or fictitious? Could I believe in woman's virtue?"

"Cease, for mercy's sake," cried the sobbing Countess. "In pity do not thus reproach. Have not years of anguish and remorse purchased yet for me a reprieve from those most cutting sarcasms? Can you continue thus to harrow up my soul, and bring me back to days of guilt, which you know full well I repent me off for ever. Oh, Maude! Maude! have I not payed full well on earth for my sad crime; you, at least, should not taunt me so cruelly."

"Well, Adelaide, let there be peace between us. In the midst of our discourse I remembered

that what I sent to you for is yet undone. You must hasten to Alice; you must break in upon the conference which I know now is taking place; and you must arouse the suspicions of the husband. Adelaide, consider the awful consequence of a renewal of love such as was theirs."

"Maude, I will not do to Alice the injury of making Sir Leopold even more disagreeable to her than he is by hinting at such a matter; but I will go instantly to his house, and if I find it as you say, I will hinder the prosecution of their conversation."

"Be it so. Hasten, Adelaide, again to me ere you return home, and tell me how matters are."

The Countess hurried from the house of the Marchioness to that of Sir Leopold, and appeared to Alice just as she had been quitted by the Earl. Lady Arlingham glanced around the apartment, as she entered, to see if what the Marchioness dreaded had occurred; and as she

beheld the tearful Alice seated alone and in sadness, her heart beat gladly, for she surmised that her friend had judged wrongfully.

She took the seat lately occupied by Lord Portland, and feigning anxiety for the health of Alice as the cause of her visit, brought about her inquiries, by saying—

“I feared, Alice, that you were ill, as I have not seen you these last few days; tell me, dearest, the reason of those tears. Surely, nothing could have occurred unpleasant between you and Sir Leopold since we met?”

“Nothing, my kind friend; but sometimes reflections, unwished-for, will intrude.”

“But, Alice, you should not thus court them by solitude. You should dispel them by intercourse with the world, and the society of your friends. Have you been alone to-day?”

“No. Sir Leopold had one or two friends at dinner.”

“Oh, I suppose they were strangers to you. Did you dine later than usual, for, if not, I think they tarry long away?”

Alice paused for an instant; but suddenly she raised her eyes to those of her companion, and with a voice which silenced all farther inquiry, replied—

“Lady Arlingham, one of my husband’s guests was a being of whom you and I can never hold converse. Conscience can never permit either of us to think dispassionately on him whom we both have injured; and it rests in our own bosoms to judge whether the wrong was done intentionally or otherwise.”

The Countess coloured, but did not speak, until the entrance of Sir Leopold and his companion broke up the disagreeable *tête-à-tête*.

The two baronets were, to use a significant phrase, ‘fuddled;’ and Lady Arlingham, who had been aware of Sir Leopold’s besetting sin, did not dare to look towards his wife, who could not conceal the disgust which he inspired her with.

A long, dull, and disagreeable evening followed; and Alice with delight beheld the departure of the Countess. Glad to escape herself

from the intoxicated fools, the lady of the house retired, to the extreme gratification of those gentlemen, who were glad of an opportunity to finish the carouse which they had begun.

Lady Arlingham returned to her friend to detail the circumstances which had taken place at Lindorf House; she said—

“ You need not fear, Maude; Portland, in place of seeking her, avoids her. I found her alone, and weeping.”

“ Are you sure, Adelaide, that ere your arrival he had not been with her. Do you think that Alice cannot dissimulate?”

“ I am convinced of it. She is above the paltry equivocations of her sex; and had Portland been with her, he never would so soon have left her, and in such sorrow too.”

“ If thus they meet, Adelaide, we are safe; but did Alfred not appear at all?”

“ He did not. But Sir Leopold and his abominable brother baronet were there.”

“ Were they drunk?”

“ Yes; they both disgusted me.”

“ Poor Alice ! I am sorry, Adelaide, we did not marry her to some one besides that beast, but we could not help it, you know. Is she becoming more contented ? ”

“ Contented, Maude ; why, if you saw her you would say her heart is breaking. ”

“ If so, Adelaide, how comes it that she looks so lovely ? ”

“ I know not. She is indeed more beautiful than ever, but that beauty tells that it but fore-runs the awful change to which we must come at last. ”

“ Cease, Adelaide, I cannot bear to hear you thus. Alice may break her heart, poor fool, and die, but we are wiser, and will do otherwise. Portland will soon forget his first love, and then you may preach for ever, but not to me. ”

“ I wish, Maude, that preaching of any sort could touch your heart, for, notwithstanding all the past, I love you. ”

“ Love me, Adelaide ! Ha ! ha ! nonsense, add not duplicity to your sins, woman. Our

love for each other is in the end but love of self; yes, self, Adelaide. If you are lost, I am so likewise; and, if my fame goes, where then is yours. Tush, talk not to me of love between us."

"Farewell, Maude; and though you scoff at me, and jest upon my words, remember that sinners, such as we are, are not wholly lost to hope; and that I, even I, can look forward to casting off my crimes, and becoming cleansed and purified from the iniquities which encompass me, through the means, and for the sake of One whose death has marked out for me my salvation.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WEEKS rolled on, and Lord Portland still lingered in London. Unaware of the state of his Lordship's feelings, Sir Leopold witnessed his increasing intimacy at his house with marked and evident pleasure; while Lady Arlingham, blinded by appearances, was totally ignorant of the true state of the case. The Earl, apprised of the part which she had played, was scrupulous of even alluding to the name of Alice in her presence, and completely deceived her, and through her, his mother; who, by degrees, became absorbed by other matters, and seldom thought of Alice.

In the mean time Lord Portland became better; his health was renovated, and his mind

was cheered. In the society of Alice he gradually became composed, and while listening to her voice forgot his sorrows. Day after day found him by her side, unconscious of the danger which he ran, or the evil which he was committing. In her presence alone was he happy, and that happiness he alone coveted. Absorbed by her image, he was heedless of the risk which he was running, or the opinions which would be caused by his conduct; and blinded by his passions and his feelings he was unaware of the sinfulness of both.

And Alice too was learning to look for happiness in the company of him, whom, as a wife, she should have shunned. With him only was her affliction forgotten, and of him only could she think. When away from her, the hours, the moments, the seconds were counted which would intervene ere they again could meet. She looked to him as the only being whose society could console her; and, like a miser, ruminating over his accumulated treasures, she found but comfort in pondering on her remembrances of

his words and actions, during his temporary absences.

But though the faint bloom of returning health had tinged her cheek, and though the coral of her lips had been again recalled, still conscience would whisper to her that all was not right, and that the paths which she was treading were not those of peace. Passion was endeavouring, with all its alluring blandishments, to undermine the principles of virtue; and though the task promised to be one of difficulty, still the warning admonitions of one long since a tenant of the grave, would rise to memory, but to be discarded, so engrossed was the unhappy Alice by the temptations of the arch fiend.

For hours upon hours would they sit together; silent, and wrapped, as it were, in meditations on each other. The influence of love still predominant over both, was visible in each look and action; and Alice did not strive to hide the bliss which those meetings was inspiring. Her dull and stupid husband, ignorant of the true source of her returning health, witnessed with delight

its manifest appearances; and imagined that the rank and title of Lady Lindorf was quite sufficient cause for the restoration.

But, happily for the peace of Alice, Lady Arlingham began to entertain suspicions of the true state of her heart. That lady, guided by some secret interest, was indefatigable in endeavouring to comfort and console her during the period of her affliction and misery. She had tried to conciliate her affections for her husband; she had directed her attentions towards her duty as a wife when Alice had been struggling between propriety and disgust; and now she marked, with dread and horror, the change which had taken place. She watched for some considerable time, unwilling to allow the truth of her surmises; but, in the end, was forced to acknowledge the reality of them. For many reasons she did not wish to apprise Lady Cornwall of the matter, and she determined, as the only means left her to pursue, to reason with Alice herself upon the subject, and leave it to

her own firm and hitherto upright mind to abandon the intercourse so hazardous to her honour.

For this purpose she had resolved to visit her at an hour when she would be alone and disengaged; and, notwithstanding the interdict which Alice had placed on the mention of Lord Portland, to introduce the matter, and insist on a cessation of their intimacy.

But Lord Portland, in accordance with his usual habit, had been with Alice for hours before her arrival. Sir Leopold had gone out, and a long, long silence had been interrupted by the Earl.

“Alice,” he said, “how happy I feel at even thus beholding you. I ask no greater bliss than thus to sit and look upon you, though once I thought I could not bear it. How gladly will we seize upon the shadow of what once enchanted us. Since we have met, health faintly blooms upon your cheek, and surely it must arise from feelings similar to those which have

dispelled in part the gloom and heaviness of my heart. Speak, Alice, for to you I own the truth."

"It may be as you say, Alfred; for to have heard from you my pardon was indeed a blessing. I did not hope for it, although I felt that I deserved it; and that, if it was withheld, life would be still more miserable than it was. I feel like you that thus to meet is one comfort still permitted me to enjoy. When we part we may, perhaps, think otherwise, and wish that fortune had not thus indulged us."

"And why should we think of parting, Alice? We have been but now reunited, and why dream of separating? The intercourse which we enjoy is too pure to cause to you a wish that it should ever be interrupted. Surely not even your mind can see in it aught of impropriety."

"I do not; but still a feeling will intrude upon me, and hint, that as a married woman, the joys and pleasures of my single life should not now engross me. But I banish such thoughts from me; for I should not, need not, harbour them."

“ No, Alice, dearest and best beloved, the love which now I feel for you is not that passion which burned within the heart of Alfred for Alice Beauclerk. As a wife, as the wife of another, I dare not own it to you; and if I did feel it, you should never know it. As a sister, a sister ten thousand times more loved than was ever such before, I love you. To separate from you would be my death; to live, and sometimes look upon you, will be my life, and the only blessing which I crave.”

“ But, Alfred, you owe more to the world, and the place which you hold in it, than you do to me or even to yourself. Remember that the honours of an old and noble family are vested in you, and therefore you are called upon to support them. Our friendship must soon be dissolved; another must claim it, as well as all your affections. To her you must yield your heart, purified from all other impressions; and, as a husband, forget that we had ever met.”

“ Never, Alice, never. No woman, save yourself, shall claim my heart or my affections.

Do you think that all the arguments and sophistry of friends and relatives would induce me to become a villain, and deceive some unsuspecting girl, by vows as false as they would be perfidious? No, Alice; to live near you, to hear your accents so dearly loved, to see you smile, and regard me as a friend and as a brother, are all the hopes which now I nourish, are all the wishes to which I now aspire."

"Those arguments will never do, Alfred. You must not harbour such ideas; for the present you are content, but that must not suffice, for to the future you must look. Think of your mother's wishes, think of your own duties, think of my entreaties."

"And, Alice, could you wish me married?"

"For your own sake I would, dear Alfred."

"But what would be your own feelings, Alice?"

"It matters not. But, believe me, your happiness I would prefer before my own; and I know the heart and tenderness of some fond and

gentle woman would insure it." And, as Alice spoke she sighed.

Lord Portland took her hand, and as he held it, clasped in his, he said—

"And, Alice, would you recommend marriage, and the joys of it, from your own experience?"

"Mine is not a union such as yours would be. No treachery or barbarity will force you to accept a hand, when you dislike its owner. No subterfuge will hasten an event which you would ever after deplore. No, Alfred, your choice will fall on one whom you will love, and can esteem; your wife must be a noble one."

"Alice, if I should ever wed, my choice shall be some dull and heartless being, who will not perceive the hatred with which I shall behold her, or care for it did she know it. She shall be some wealthy, sordid fool, a fitter and more proper mate for Lindorf than you were. If you will goad me on to madness by your words, I will be revenged on you, and thus reply."

Alice wept as the bitterness of the Earl's words met her ear; and he, amazed at the intemperance of his unkind discourse, endeavoured to console her; and he held her hand and drew her to him. Her head was upon his shoulder; her tears were falling on his cheek, which was bent towards her, as he whispered, when the door opened, and Lady Arlingham entered.

As she beheld the pair of sorrowing lovers thus engaged, she stopped. Her colour heightened, and she could not speak. Lord Portland rose, and leaving Alice almost fainting, quitted the apartment, and left the Countess to her for an explanation, which he felt he could not listen to.

At last she approached Alice, and with a tone, which bespoke more of sorrow than of anger, said—

“Can I believe that Alice, the pure, the spotless, the high minded; the child of my heart, the pupil of her departed guardian, the wife of

Sir Leopold, would thus disgrace herself, her friends, her husband, and destroy him whom she loved. Oh, Alice, how you have deceived me! On your fidelity, and on your purity, I would have staked my salvation."

Alice, stung to the quick by the words and manner of her friend, was some time ere she could reply to her. The case was too plain, and the truth too evident to be denied, even if she had intended to do so, and she was obliged to remain silent and embarrassed. Lady Arlingham continued.

"I know too well, and have proved too deeply, the deceitfulness of my own heart to upbraid you, Alice, for what I fondly trust has been but the excited feeling of a moment. Look up, my child, do not fear *me*, for I have had *my* days of imprudence; aye, Alice, and more than that too, *my* days of guilt. I can feel for you, for I, like you, had been tempted from the paths of rectitude; but, I trust, that not, like *me*, has the temptation been too strong. Confide in me,

Alice; though I helped to betray you once, I shall be henceforth to you only as a friend; and, if I can, dear girl, an adviser."

Alice threw her arms around the Countess, and sobbed bitterly. At once the extent of her transgression had broken upon her, and she perceived how great had been her fault. When partially recovered, she said—

"I am, indeed, guiltless, save in having thought too much of him. My only crime has been in loving him when I should have forgotten him. Oh, kindest friend! comfort and advise me in this peril, and I will obey you. Do not leave me thus, for I know not how best to act in this emergency. If you desire it, I shall never again see him; and, if you advise, I will try to forget him; but, forgive me when I confess the truth, that that will be a hard and a painful task, nevertheless I will try to do so."

"You must, Alice; you are bound to do so. You must refrain from seeing, meeting, or con-

versing with him. But that is not all; you must write to him, he will obey your wishes. You must advise him to acquiesce with his mother's wishes. He must marry Lady Leonora Saville. Nay now, Alice, you must not give way thus to your feelings, he *must* marry. His parents command it; the lady herself wishes it; and he must repair a long, long term of extravagance with her noble fortunes. Every thing is now at stake, and he must either connect himself with affluence and wealth, or become, comparatively speaking, a beggar. Alice, on you I leave this task, as the sole and only means of saving Portland; and forgive me for adding your own reputation. The busy tongue of scandal has even already been at work; the finger of calumny is already pointed at you, and on yourself now rests the preservation or the downfall of your fame. I would not hurt your mind (for well I know it to be uncontaminated with guilt) by hinting to you the reports already in circulation. Alice, for your own sake, for the

sake of Portland, for the honour of your husband, remember your vows plighted at the sacred altar of your God !”

“ I do, I do, dearest Lady Arlingham. Tell me how best to act, and I will obey you. Believe me, my thoughts and actions have not been as bad as they appear to you.”

“ Do not talk of actions or thoughts, Alice, they must of necessity have been bad. Surely you endeavoured to forget your duty as a wife ; you acknowledge that Portland was the ‘ god of your idolatry ;’ and must not thoughts connected with such sentiments be bad ? Ah, Alice, you have yet to prove the depth of sin contained in each and every human heart !”

“ I can know it, for too evident is the whirlpool of sin from which your warning voice has called me. Secure in the fancied probity of a mind and heart which I did not know, I was plunging headlong to destruction. But, thanks be to Him who sent you as my preserver !”

“ Call me not your preserver, Alice, for, if you knew me, you would behold in me but the

author and abettor of your ruin. But, my poor child, I hear the voice of Sir Leopold; retire and compose yourself ere you meet him. But, beware, and obey my counsels; for once they speak of faithfulness and truth."

CHAPTER XXXI.

“ SHE will not see me, she returns unopened all my letters, and you, and only you, have been the cause of this additional misery,” exclaimed Lord Portland, in an agony of passion to Lady Arlingham, as they met in the boudoir of his mother, who was at the moment absent.

“ If she refuses, dearest Portland, to see you, if she will not read your letters, mine is not the fault; she knows too well the bearing of a wife to run the chance of an exposure such as met my view when last you saw her. For shame, Alfred, if you loved her as a maiden, her fame and honour as a wife should have been dearer to you than to allow passion thus to triumph over principle; if I advised, you should know that it was as a friend.”

“ Aye, it was as a friend to ruin her, to deceive her, to league yourself with falsehood, and ensnare the angel who trusted you. Forbear to boast to me of friendship such as this.”

“ Others, Alfred, laid the plans, and facilitated the matters for which you blame me. But even were I to have played the part you mean, surely you could not think me iniquitous enough to look calmly and dispassionately on the eternal ruin of Alice Lindorf.”

“ Call not that sainted and aggrieved being by a name so odious and revolting as that you mention. I alone know her as Alice Beauclerk, and only as such should she be termed in my presence ; but it matters not to what appellation she may lay claim, my heart will love her,—my soul shall adore her as truly even now as when in the freshness and purity of maiden loveliness she pledged her faith to one who never will forget his claim until death has summoned him to resign it. She may be calumniated, she may be traduced, the venomous tongue of slander may be raised against her ; but not all the artifices of the un-

feeling world will force me to think less fondly of the idol of my soul. She shall see me,—she shall hear me again and again pleading the cause of a broken heart, and time and pity shall melt her from the icy sternness of your commands.”

“My commands are as nothing with Lady Lindorf, she accepts and follows the dictates of affection and friendship, but to sway her I have not power. I know that a mind strong and brilliant as hers, may perchance be for a second deluded by passion, and recalled feelings (such as were hers); but Alfred, dearest Alfred, her rectitude is too deeply implanted in her heart, and has been too long her guide and comforter, to be triumphed over by the wicked allurements of false and deceptive reasonings, such as must be the language of a former lover to a wedded wife. I know and am persuaded, that in the coolness of reflection you will perceive the wrong, the deadly wrong, which you are doing her; and I feel assured that when you do so, you will fly from her, and leave her secure in the inno-

cence of her heart. You are warm and intemperate, Alfred, but you must learn to stem the current of your passions."

"Joined with my mother in a league to unite me with one whom I detest, you stop at nothing which you imagine can help your purpose, or further your design. You think to wean me from my first and only love, in order that the heartless, cold, and wealthy Leonora may usurp in my seared heart the place of Alice; but all your stratagems are ineffectual, for I will not wed her. No not for all the wealth which she can bestow upon her husband 'would I put perjury on my soul,' for such indeed would be the act that would attend my marriage. Alice can plead in her defence for her broken vows, falsehood, deceit, and treachery; but for me no such excuses can avail. I would rush headlong to my ruin, I would but render miserable the frigid being who should become my unhappy and unloved wife."

"You may reason as you will, Portland. But

your own conduct has rendered your marriage necessary as well for you as for Alice, and she knows it well."

"And how is my irremediable misery necessary to the interests of Alice?"

"Because your own folly has rendered it so. 'Rumour with her thousand tongues' has already sullied the fair fame of Alice. Reports unworthy of her or of you are even now fast circulating through the dwellings of our most intimate acquaintances; and ere long the once admired and respected Lady Lindorf will have sunk into the depths of disgrace, and be deemed unworthy of the position which she holds in society. The suspicions of her husband will be raised; inquiries will be set on foot, and though no actual crimes may be laid to her charge, she will be a slandered and a suspected woman; she will be shunned, where now she is courted, and Alice must pass the residue of her years a prey to remorse, and a victim to slander. You will think my other reasonings vain and foolish when compared

to those which I use in defence of the honour and reputation of Alice; but surely you should not wholly scorn them, when they are but the words of your almost expiring father; who on the brink of the grave implores of you to give him the consolation of knowing in his last hours that you will obey his dictates, and the commands of your mother. Had you heard her but a few moments ago, as I did, your heart, hardened as it is against Leonora, must have softened as you listened to the mournful pleadings of her who soon will be your only parent."

"Yes, Lady Arlingham, she will be as eloquent to me, as when with you she raised her Syren voice to ruin Alice Beaucherk."

"I am grieved, Alfred, that all my entreaties and all my reasonings are useless. Alice too will feel pained when I tell her that notwithstanding her wishes, you are still headstrong and opposed to the means which only now can justify her."

"Lady Arlingham, you cannot say that any

being has been savage enough to detail to Alice the chimerical ideas and slanderous fancies of the world."

"I can say it, Portland. I first spoke to her, and hinted at the rumours which were fast spreading, and she has implored of me to speak to you, and say that she can never again know peace until you resign all thoughts of her, and become the husband of another."

"She must tell me this herself; her own loved voice shall soften the torturing avowal, and then perhaps I may make Alice happy, though I myself should be the sacrifice."

"She cannot see you, Portland; honour and duty to her husband forbid it; you must hearken to her words through me."

"I cannot; for pardon me, you are too much the friend of my mother, to judge dispassionately between Alice, and between me; from her, and from her alone, I must know her sentiments and wishes."

"Be it so, Alfred, I shall tell her what you say; and well I know the comfort which she will

derive from your vows. She dreads her own shadow, and even her unsuspecting husband begins to look coldly on her."

"If so, by heavens, she shall not brook the whims and oddities of that hateful brute; she shall scorn him,—she shall leave him,—she shall fly from him."

"To you should she fly, Alfred? For you should she scorn him? Oh Alfred! sin and passion are warring even now within you. In the heat of your intemperate feelings you would even now rush to her, and snatch her from the virtuous elevation of a wife, to sink her to the lowest abyss of sin, and criminal indulgence; you would this moment tear her from the side of her husband, from the society of the pure and noble, from the paths of innocence and peace; to drag with you a polluted and disgraced existence, to become but a fitting companion for the ignoble and the base. If such be your sentiments, Alfred, you are indeed unworthy the name of man."

"I deny it. Is it unmanly to wrest the purest

and most faultless of created beings from the base and unmanly control and command of a sordid, drivelling fool, who knows not the value of the treasure which he possesses? Is it unmanly to shield her from the querulous complaints, and unceasing intemperance of a monster that she hates and loathes? If it is so, I cannot help it. We may live and love together, without a thought of sin, or a sentiment of guilt. The love which I bear her is not a selfish or a criminal one,—it is as pure as that of a brother. She knows it to be so; I told her of it, and she believed me.”

“Your fancied pure and brotherly affection is nothing more or less than a sinful and criminal love. If Alice leaves the protection of her husband, if she quits the shelter of his roof, even to come to that of mine, she is lost for ever, and you will have been the sole cause of her everlasting ruin. ‘A woman must not only be virtuous, but she must appear so.’ ”

“I care not for appearances; what are they but the imposed forms of a world as sinful as it is cruel and unpitying?”

“ That may be the case, Alfred. But portray to yourself, after the first excitements of rapture at separating Alice from all that was good and noble had subsided, could you bear to behold her whom you profess to idolize, scorned, neglected, and despised by those whose equal, if not superior she now is. Could you endure to see her mocked and slighted, the object of opprobrium and obloquy; the suffering, calumniated victim of your unlawful passions ?”

“ You may pursue your reasonings and invectives, but I am fully aware that they all tend to the one end, namely, my marriage with the Lady Saville. If you wish to turn my thoughts towards such an event, and against Alice, methinks you should have chosen some bright and more attractive being to invest with my name and title, than that unfeeling, calculating girl, the opposite in every respect to what I could ever love, or even admire.”

“ Leonora is amiable, Alfred, although she may not be fortunate enough to appear so; believe me that, added to her exceeding strength

of mind, she is blessed with a temper that never is even ruffled, she is the idol of her parents, and one whom I know to be well calculated to make you happy. The Cornwall estates are decreasing in value; years of extravagance have overloaded them with debt; and I am well convinced that your father is sinking from a knowledge of the embarrassments which are pressing upon the property, and a conviction of your determined opposition to the only means that can retrieve it. Lord Pettigrew will give to his daughter, if she marries you, three hundred thousand pounds, and at his death an unincumbered property of twenty, or perhaps thirty thousand a year. With this seasonable relief your ancient and honourable house will be able to maintain its wonted dignity, and become free of the accumulated embarrassments that now render it of little value. Your mother will not again allude to the subject, for she is both pained and offended at your headstrong resolution, and I, as her most intimate friend, crave that licence for thus speaking. I have told you how ardently

Alice longs for an event which will restore her to her lost peace, and defeat the slanders and envies of her enemies. If she sees you, (which I doubt,) you will hear what I have been saying verified."

"I will be guided by her wishes, as I before said to you; and, Lady Arlingham, I implore that you will not, through misconceived ideas of kindness, endeavour to widen the breach which you have caused, or prevent my once again beholding her. If you wish to induce my compliance to your and my mother's wishes, it must be achieved by the eloquence of Alice alone."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE more that Alice thought upon her indiscretion, the more was she alarmed. She found by sad experience the truth of Lady Arlingham's words concerning the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of her own heart, and she shuddered as she thought upon the narrow escape which she had had.

Though guiltless, she remembered with deepest contrition the temerity with which she had ventured herself into the constant society of one still too dear to her ; and she perceived how much she had risked by depending upon her own resolves, and trusting to her own power and ability to resist temptation. She had been more than

once tempted to disclose to her husband her intimacy with Lord Portland ere she had been married ; as likewise the affection which had then subsisted between them. But the silly, pompous, and trifling manner of Sir Leopold, and his captious and unpleasant temper, had at all times prevented her from being thus candid and generous to him. Wrapped up in self and every thing connected with it, the Baronet had not one thought in common with his wife ; purse proud, ridiculously vain of his pedigree and family honours, he not only disgusted her from any esteem which she might feel for him, but likewise every one with whom he was acquainted, or boasted of being related to, shunned and avoided him as a vain and empty simpleton. Alice had observed the feelings with which he was regarded everywhere he went, and had therefore endeavoured to wean him from his passion for visiting. She was totally unsuccessful, for, wedded to his own opinions whatever they might chance to be, he disregarded all her wishes.

and entreaties; and continued an unceasing round of never-ending dissipation, in which of course he obliged her to join.

He had been ruminating for some time where he would pass the summer, as London was quickly losing its fashionable visitants; and to remain behind the dukes, marquisses, earls, and the etcetera of nobility, would have been impossible. Alice had left the selection to him, for though he had gone through the ceremony of asking her to fix upon a summer tour, she had declined giving an opinion, or expressing a wish; as that would have been the reason why he would have raised some objection or opposition. The weighty matter had remained unsettled, until Sir Leopold was forced by the numerous departures to make a definitive choice.

“ I think, my dear,” said he one morning as he stood at a window observing the arrangements of a travelling retinue at the door of an opposite house,—“ I think Ireland is all the fashion this year. Suppose we cross over, visit some of my ancient estates, and pay a visit for a

few days to Lord Caddington. He is a nobleman of whom even the Lindorf family may be proud. His truly estimable Lady is related to me by the mother's side, for old Lord Beauchamp's first wife was first married to Lady Jane Neville's son, and Lady Jane Neville was grand aunt to Lady Hyde, who was own first and second cousin to my grandmother; hence our connexion with Lady Caddington, who was youngest daughter of the aforesaid Lord Beauchamp by Blanch, his third wife."

"I should like to go to Ireland again," said Alice timidly, fearing that such a declaration might cause her lord and master to alter his intentions.

"Why, Alice, I do not know why you should like to go to Ireland. Your acquaintances are not aristocratic, though of course you need not say so when we are with the Viceroy. My family is so well known every where, that an odd acquaintanceship in the middle ranks of life will not injure us."

"When do you think of going, Sir Leopold?"

“ I should suppose Lord Cameron will leave this on Tuesday, and I know His Grace of H—— will go on Wednesday. Therefore, on Thursday we shall set off, and the public will be aware that we are as usual in the centre of fashion. I must go to Lindorf Court, and as I have not a regular establishment there, I propose remaining for one or two days at Dudley Grove, where, Alice, we first met; we can recall many pleasant incidents and *tête-à-têtes* to each other, as they passed in the days of our love-making.”

Lady Arlingham being announced, Sir Leopold paused in his harangue; and after the first complimentary nonsense had passed on all sides, he acquainted her ladyship with his projected tour. After expatiating for a sufficient time on the connexion between him and the Countess of Caddington, with other equally important affairs, the worthy Baronet sallied out of the room on some weighty matters intent, and gave Lady Arlingham an opportunity of relating to Alice her conversation with the Earl. He had, on

leaving the Countess, called at Sir Leopold's. The Baronet was at home, and he had been with him for hours, but no Alice made her appearance. In vain the agitated and fevered young nobleman had waited, in hopes that fortune might favour his wishes, and grant to him a view of her. He was disappointed, and he was obliged to go away, relying on the hopes of the interview, which, though Lady Arlingham did not encourage him to expect, he thought she might, for the furtherance of his mother's views, induce Alice to grant.

“ I cannot see him, Lady Arlingham,” said Alice; “ you judged kindly and rightly when you told him so. I have seen too much of him; but if you think my persuasions will help to bring about his union with one so gifted as you report Lady Leonora to be, I will write and entreat him. I doubt whether I am right even in thus doing; but you shall see my letter, and judge it.”

“ No, Alice, I must not see it; it must be your own free act. Your own feelings, your

own sentiments, your own entreaties, will have more weight and power than were I to speak for years and dictate volumes. Your own sense of propriety will tell you what best to say, and how best to act. Your journey to Ireland will allow us time to bring about the desired event. On your return, you can avoid much intercourse, and by degrees Portland will be reconciled to his fate."

"I cannot think, my dear adviser, that a marriage thus enforced will be productive of happiness."

"But, Alice, it will be the saving of his property; and Leonora is so gentle and so mild, that she will be all obedience to his wishes."

"When I was about to change the name of Alice Beaucherk for that of Lady Lindorf, those were some of the very arguments which you, in your mistaken zeal, enforced. I have wealth, unbounded wealth, more than I could ever have expected to possess. My husband was painted as gentle, mild, and amiable; I believed all—and am I happy with my wealth? Is the part-

ner that you chose for me as obedient to my wishes as you promised, and as kind and gentle as you pronounced him to be? Ah, Lady Arlingham! we should judge for ourselves in this awful engagement, and not be led by the wishes and representations of our prejudiced and over-anxious friends."

"Alice, you will yet be happy. Your wealth will be to you a source of gratification as yet unknown. Sir Leopold will yet be all that you can wish, and a fond and gentle husband. Age will increase his good propensities, and soften away the bad; as you become more reconciled to him, his little peculiarities will appear less, and you will settle into a fond and affectionately attached wife."

"I should be very sorry, Lady Arlingham, if Portland enters the marriage state with only hopes of happiness like those which you describe. Though I may bear up against fate, I know his disposition too well to think he could do the same. You say he esteems Lady Leonora: esteem is a cold feeling towards one who is

closely connected as is a wife ; nevertheless, that sentiment is more congenial than to wed and—almost hate.”

“ If you could see Leonora, Alice, you would admire her ; and I know that were it not for you, she would long since have been the wife of Alfred.”

“ If so, Lady Arlingham, I will indeed use all my influence to promote their union. Believe me, your last words have had more weight and been more consolatory than all that you previously have said. I will write, I will entreat, and perhaps I may succeed. If I hear from him again, you shall know it.”

“ You will have for this, Alice, his mother’s blessing. It will recall his father back to life, and turn him from the ruin which he is brooding upon.”

“ I want no blessings, I want no praises or encomiums ; what I do is for the sake of Portland, and of him alone. His mother has been, at all times, but a treacherous friend to me. If

Portland is happy, I care not for his wealth; for 'riches are but vanity.' ”

“ You should not think thus harshly of Lady Cornwall, Alice, for she loves you.”

“ If she did, why ruin me ?”

“ Alice, it was for the sake of her child.”

“ And she ruined him too. Why, her affection shows forth most strangely ;—those she loves, she destroys !”

“ If you knew her reasons, Alice, you could not blame her. Death to her only son—nay, I might almost say only child, were preferable than his marriage with an Alice Beauclerk. Reasons awful and appalling should cause her to prevent a union such as that would be.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Lady Lindorf to Lord Portland.

MY LORD,

YOU have expressed a wish to see me; Lady Arlingham has acquainted me with your desire, and, though unable to comply with her request or your entreaties, I take this opportunity of pleading my excuses.

You may perhaps feel surprised at the sudden alteration in my conduct towards you, but I trust that your noble and generous mind will pardon the part which duty now compels me to enact, and give me credit for the true reasons which induced the change. Separated as we are by a barrier over which we could not pass,

we should have remembered the dangers which we were incurring, and we should have thought upon our own inefficiency to defend ourselves from the errors and indiscretions of our conduct. But, led on by the allurements of our own feelings, we saw not, nor dreaded the dangers which were crowding upon us unperceived, until the warning voice of friendship taught me to know myself, and pointed out to me the sinfulness of my heart. Since the awful moment which awakened me to a recollection of the precipice on which I stood, I have longed to see you, and to bewail to you my own inadvertence ; but I find I cannot, dare not, risk a meeting ; and you will not, I am sure, further importune me on a subject on which my mind is most decidedly made up.

You are called upon by those who love you to select a wife. Alfred, obey the wishes of your parents, and those friends so interested in your welfare. Choose from among the beautiful, the noble, and the good, some fair and lovely girl whose tastes and disposition may resemble yours.

I hear much of the Lady Leonora Saville ; I am told she claims the dower of a princess, and that she is young, and fair, and gentle. Above all, I hear she loves you. If so, Alfred, take her—take her to your heart, cherish her, and love her ; share with her your affections, and prize her as your life. In the soft moments of tenderness, and ere you call her wife, tell her of the passion which first engrossed you—tell her of your trials and your sorrows—tell her of Alice Beaucherk. If she bears for you the passion which she should, she will love you still more for what you have endured, and still more for the confidence which you repose in her. You will read this letter for my sake, and for my sake, Alfred, you will obey me. When years of wedded bliss have passed over you, we may meet, and then will you prove the truth of the advice which now I give you. Surely, though for a season our rebellious natures may feel deeply and acutely a separation and total alienation from each other, we must in the end experience the good effects of having conceded

inclination to honour and propriety. We may, perchance, never again meet, until that period comes when our spirits may appear together, purified from the vain presumptuous passions which have caused us to rebel against the will of Heaven and its decrees. Alfred, against that time we shall have changed our vile and worldly natures ; and may we be so prepared as to rejoice in the end of all things, and be enabled to unite for ever in that land where sorrow never dwells !

When married, Alfred, you must obliterate from memory the passages in your life which were connected with me ; you must cease to think of me, save as a friend. Honour, religion, and virtue, demand this sacrifice on your part ; for to bestow your hand when your heart still remains unweaned from its first love, would indeed be unworthy of you, and an act of the grossest barbarity to an affectionately confiding wife. Ere you receive this letter, I shall be far away from you, and nothing will be left to tempt you from the paths of duty. I will not open

any letters of yours, for I know the force and strength of temptations. Through Lady Arlingham I may hear of you, when your nuptials shall have been solemnized, and not until then. Farewell, Alfred; may your days on earth be long and prosperous! may no clouds obscure the brightness of your existence! and when death shall claim you as its victim, may you ascend to that blest sphere where all shall be as bright and as beautiful as yourself!

ALICE.

Lady Arlingham was entrusted with this letter; but in accordance with the desire of Alice, she was to retain it until Alice had left London for Ireland, which event took place on the appointed Thursday, at the exact hour on which two or three illustrious peers and some high-born commoners also took to flight.

Sir Leopold, all bustle and importance, had arranged every thing most scientifically. His departure was attended by every requisite éclat, and he sent his own statement of the important

occurrences to the proper authorities. Alice, pleased at any change which would withdraw them from London, and its fatigues and annoyances, appeared in better spirits, and was able to call up a faint smile in reply to Sir Leopold's exclamations of pleasure and content as they whirled off, followed by the magnificent equipage of a celebrated nobleman.

Their journey was devoid of interest; but Alice hailed with pleasure the first view of that dear land where her years of peace and happiness had passed. As she recalled to remembrance the train of circumstances which had occurred since last her feet rested on that beautiful land, she could scarcely believe them to be aught but dreams. How happily, and with what bright and sunny hopes had she quitted it, looking forward to all that was pleasing and enticing! But now how did she return?—woe-worn, depressed, and wretched; with only the dim prospect of a more miserable future. Sir Leopold was happily ignorant of her increased melancholy, as he was a martyr

to the hereditary Lindorf sea-sickness, and was therefore confined to his berth during the whole of the voyage. He had had for many years (though he kept it as much as possible to himself) a tendency to asthma, and had been, previous to his leaving London, suffering considerably from it. However, as he gradually became better, he had neglected to summon medical advice, and imagined that his summer tour would completely establish him again in his usual health.

He had written to Mr. Dudley to acquaint him with his intended visit, which gave no little delight and satisfaction to that gentleman. Sir Leopold possessed extensive estates near Dudley Grove; and as his agent in Ireland had been exceedingly feeble and infirm, Mr. Darby Dudley looked forward to getting his situation, or, as he expressed himself, “stepping into his shoes;” which he considered (and very justly too) would be a nice addition to his property. This worthy man had always his “eye teeth” about him; and not being particularly retiring

or modest, he never let an opportunity pass of "bettering himself."

On landing, Alice and the still complaining Sir Leopold proceeded to Dudley Grove, where they were welcomed by the most fulsome compliments and flattery. Poor Mrs. Dudley herself appeared really glad to see Alice, of whom she had become exceedingly fond during her residence with them; though the order in which she was always kept by her young ladies had prevented her manifesting it as she would have wished.

Dudley Grove was unaltered; every thing appeared exactly as when Alice left it, with the exception of an immense tea-house which had been erected in front of the dwelling, with a pigeon-house at top, and a piece of cannon (a four-pounder) perched like a weathercock above all; which said piece of artillery was faced precisely opposite the hall-door, as Mr. Dudley said, to defend the house from the Rockites; though in reality, if it had been fired off, it must from its position have blown in the door,

and in all probability blown up the nutshell of a house.

“ Extravagantly glad to see your Ladyship, Lady Lindorf ; extravagantly happy to find that Dudley Grove has been productive of such happy circumstances. Good omen for the girls, I say : English noblemen coming here for Irish wives.” As Mr. Dudley finished, he roared at his own wit, which drew peals of laughter also from Sir Leopold—so delighted was he at being thought a nobleman, even by a Mr. Darby Dudley of Dudley Grove.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN event so uncommon as the visit of a baronet and his lady to the dwelling of Mr. Dudley, was not destined to pass without some additional trouble and expense to that gentleman and his wife. They therefore determined to invite as many of the neighbouring gentry to dinner as they could manage to entertain, and cut a dash on the hope and strength of the expected agency.

Mrs. Dudley laboured early and late to conduct the business of her house, as suited the opinions of her more enlightened daughters; while, at the same time, she endeavoured to manage economically. Initiated as was Alice in the secrets and mysteries of the house, she

could not avoid feeling amused at the exertions of the whole family to appear at ease and unembarrassed. Heaps of plated ware which seldom saw the light were taken from their repository, and brushed up by the strong arm of our old acquaintance Pat, under the surveillance of his notable mistress. Sitting rooms were opened for the admission of company, that seldom had received the air or light of heaven, smelling most dismally of damp and must. Company china, company clothes, company every thing, was on this momentous occasion exhibited.

The Lindorfs were to remain only two days at Dudley Grove, and on the second was the great dinner to take place. Every one of respectability with whom they had any acquaintance, was invited; and Mrs. Dudley had promised herself the greatest eclat from the business; but unfortunately for her, her husband and daughters insisted that, instead of her officiating in the kitchen, and burning up her face until it would become the colour of pickled red cabbage, she should hire for the important day a cook

from a neighbouring town, at the sum of five shillings, provided the dinner turned out well; if not, one-half of the money was to be kept back by the thrifty mistress.

Early that morning the kitchen was made ready by Peg and Lady Lindorf's namesake, Alley. The dishes for the first course were laid out on the kitchen table, those for the second on the dresser, and those for the dessert on two deal boards, supported on some of Mr. Dudley's machinery. Mrs. Dudley had read and re-read to the presiding cooking deity sundry bills of fare, which were plentifully scattered round the kitchen and dining room. After soup there was to be a turbot at the head of the table, removed with a calves' head hash; both of which were, of course, to be dressed by the "artiste," who professed to understand them accurately. Soup at the foot was to be replaced by a saddle of mutton. Two rabbits at one side, smothered in onions, were to be matched by a pair of roasted leverets. Four young chickens, interspersed by four heads of cauliflowers, were

to correspond with a boiled fowl and parsley and butter. A tongue was to face a ham, and a pigeon pie to oppose a veal one. Dressed potatoes, mashed turnips, Jerusalem artichokes, and stewed parsnips, all swimming in butter, were to trim the corners, and fill up whatever space was empty.

As Mrs. Dudley was constantly engaged ordering and commanding, Alice saw but little of her; though she would have experienced much greater pleasure in conversing with her, unsophisticated as she was, than in being compelled to listen to the tiresome rhodomontade and sickening flattery of her children. During the whole morning of the day on which the great and splendid dinner was to be given, the house was almost untenable with the steams of ovens, gravies, &c., and the noise of scolding, directing, and frying. Alice proposed a walk, but the young ladies were unwilling to join in it, as they would not like to tan their complexions by exposure to the broiling sun; and therefore Alice sallied forth alone.

Her former walks were revisited, with a sad and melancholy remembrance of the past and happier days of her freedom, when hope illumined the future, and deadened the feelings of disgust and dislike with which she had viewed the Grove and its uncongenial inhabitants. She sought the spot where she had parted, in all the blissful pleasures of anticipation, from the Earl, when, almost delirious with delight, he clasped her to his breast, in all the assurances of an enraptured and betrothed lover, ere she had quitted her native land. Bitter, bitter were the sensations of her throbbing heart, as she dwelt upon her present state and upon her miseries. How altered were all things within one short year! How altered was she herself, in mind and in appearance! How altered was he to whom her first and only vows of love were plighted!

The scorching heat of the noontide sun had been abated, and the soft and cooling breezes of early evening had played upon her fevered temples before she could bring herself to depart

from a spot so dear and sacred to memory. Her watch told her that but a short time intervened before the unusually late dinner-hour of that day, and she rose to return slowly to the house. A small extraordinary summer-house, in the centre of a shrubbery, was near to the arbour in which she had been seated, and as she passed close to it on her return, she heard issuing from within it a wild and plaintive song. So sad and so solemn were the sounds, that curiosity induced Alice to turn aside and look into the interior of the building, through a small gothic window which gave light to its only apartment.

The dirge-like and plaintive wailing proceeded from an old and ancient-looking female, who, seated with her back to the light, rocked herself backwards and forwards on a low stool, apparently in the most poignant mental anguish. A figure stretched before her on a table, and covered with a white pall, seemed to be the cause of her woe and the object of her regrets. As the recumbent figure was motionless, Alice concluded to herself that it must be the corpse

of some loved friend or relation, whose decease had caused such agony of mind to the aged mourner. She was about to withdraw, with noiseless footsteps, from the melancholy spot, when a voice sounded on her ear, and at the same moment the coverlid was disturbed, and the figure, as if reanimated, slowly raised itself up, and assumed a sitting position.

Alice continued gazing, for she thought the person had some resemblance to Sir Leopold. She looked again, and her suspicions were confirmed. He had lost his auburn wig, his face was colourless, and his breathing appeared hard and painful.

Shocked at what she believed to be some sudden indisposition, she hastily entered the summer-house and approached her husband, who started, and immediately jumped off the table, with an action and exertion that negatived the idea of his being indisposed. He appeared much amazed and vexed at the unexpected appearance of his wife, who eagerly sought for an explanation of the mystery.

“I trust you are not ill, Sir Leopold?” inquired she, as she looked around her, and at the old crone.

“Not at all, my dear. I suppose it is nearly dinner-time, by the aspect of the day.”

“Be me troth, but ’tis, Sur!” said the old woman; “sure oursefs is here dis betthur nor five long hours. I am quite dhry in respect of keening so long widout a sup asthore.”

“Here, my good woman, is something for your trouble, and I thank you,” replied Sir Leopold, as he put a sovereign into the woman’s shrivelled hand, and tried to draw Alice away from her.

“Many thanks to your honour! Long may you reign! and ye ill nivir want any wan to keenthecaun over ye while Katty Dalton lives to do id.”

“What can be the matter, Sir Leopold!” asked Alice. But as he did not reply, the old lady took upon herself the task of doing so:—

“Why, thin, I’ll be afthur tellen your honour-

able ladyship, ma'am. Mesef is out-an-out de finest keener in de three counties; and I knows de ins an outs of all de ould ancient families betune dis an Dublin city. Now, me name goes far an near, an Sur Laypole hard ov me be coorse; so he says to me, says he, 'Did you know any ov my family, Katty?' says he. 'I did,' says I, 'plase your honour.' 'Ov which ov 'em?' says he. 'Of 'em all,' says mesef. 'Did you ever hear,' says his honour, 'of Dorethy Duddle, who was me granmother, and got de property what I owns from Sur Pathrick O'Flannagan?' 'I did,' says I—an so I did, ma'am. Well, sure an sartin Sur Laypole axes me ov he died in Ireland what sort ov a keen would I make over him, about himself an his people; so I tould him as well as I could, ma'am; but he says to me, says he, 'Suppose you kem to-morrow' (dat is to-day, ma'am); 'an,' says he, 'meet me in de scrubbery, in de tay-house.' So when I kem, he shuts de door, an I made him stretch like a handsome corpse on de table, an I covered him wid me apron

an his own pocket hankichif, an we sot to work at wan o'clock ; an faicks I am at it sence, an handsome I spoke ov him."

Alice felt ready to drop at this public exposure of Sir Leopold's pride and vanity, and she took him by the arm and led him out of the building. He did not say a word, but looked really ashamed, and hurried away from her to recover his composure, and prepare for dinner.

The company were numerous, and all of that class of persons who delight in taking a peep at people of rank. Mr. and Mrs. Strutt, Mr. and Mrs. Doser, Mr. and Mrs. Crumpet, and the Misses Crumpet ; Dr. Fly and his maiden sister, Miss Fanny Fly ; two Mr. Pippins ; two Mr. Roes ; and the family of Dudleys, with their illustrious guests, filled up the table. Dinner was announced, and as the company seated themselves, Mrs. Dudley, in a state of the greatest agitation, cast her eyes around. All seemed to be correct ; every thing was

exactly placed as she had marked it in the bill of fare.

But, unfortunately, the soup at the head overflowed the sides of the tureen, and at each movement in the room the said tureen lurched, and the rich fluid swam over, accompanied with bits of toast and morsels of celery. However, the lady of the house contented herself with thinking that though the error had been made of putting in too much soup, still it was a fault on the right side, and better than not having soup enough. Next the turbot appeared, but, poor fellow, he had been boiled to a mummy, and presented a mashed and most watery form. Mrs. Dudley strove to smile, but she could not; and Pat read in her countenance, that the cook had already lost half her wages. Next came the calf's head, which was to have been a masterpiece of perfection; but, unhappily, it was burnt, and the startling reality burst upon the unfortunate lady's olfactory nerves the moment it entered. The saddle of mutton was raw, abso-

lutely raw, and notwithstanding Mr. Dudley's declarations of its being done to a turn, nobody would venture to eat of the livid-looking flesh, excepting that gentleman himself.

The rabbits were sent up without the onion sauce; the leverets were perfectly cold and greasy: the chickens were so red that every one shunned them; while the fowl were absolutely in pieces on the dish which held them. The vegetables were hard and tough, the ham was fiery salt; the tongue was rancid; and the quick-sighted Pat saw the eternal disgrace of Betty Cravagan, and her ejection from Dudley Grove without fee or reward, save what she might receive from the organ of discourse contained in the choleric frame of his mistress. The second course was, if possible, worse than the first; and Alice felt for the situation of poor Mrs. Dudley, who, besides her own feelings of disappointment in the business, would be compelled to bear the anger and scoldings of her family. Bitterly did the worthy woman regret

her allowing herself to be prevailed upon to engage any assistance save that of Peg and Alley. She could have cried but for the aid of a few glasses of Madeira, which Pat from time to time administered from the side-board, which, as he had put into each glass of wine a small quantity of whiskey, soon acted as a sedative, and permitted her to look calmly on her misfortunes, and even smile at them. Pat knew his mistress's weak side, and that she too often derived courage and spirits from medicines similar to those which he now exhibited, and therefore, like a trusty friend, strove to brace her nerves and soften the asperity which was more than once on the point of showing forth.

“ Sir Leopold, take a glass of wine with me,” said the poor woman, who had already taken too much. The Baronet smiled and bowed; the Miss Dudleys looked at Pat, shook their heads, and tried to catch the attention of their mother, who carefully avoided looking at them.

“Hold up your head, Pat, and hand the potatoes, though they are cold,” said Mrs. Dudley, with a laugh. Pat did as he was bid, and smiled sagaciously at Sir Leopold’s servants, who were attending.

“Are the cows milked?” again said she, though in what was meant to be a whisper to Pat. He answered in the affirmative, and again the business of eating, or endeavouring to eat, went on.

“Are the calves fed?” asked the notable lady. Mr. Dudley directed a frown and look at her that awed her into silence until the end of dinner, when, seeing Pat leave the room, she shouted, “Pat, the finger glasses as usual!” though they had made their appearance and had been removed.

Long did the ladies sit, looking in vain for the word of command, which Mrs. Dudley forgot to give, until Alice, feeling for her situation, made her a signal to rise, when, taking her arm, and tenderly guiding her out, she succeeded in

prevailing on her to retire and lie down for an hour, during which time the unfortunate cook contrived to make her escape, happy at getting away from the scene of her errors with only the loss of her expected crown.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“MOTHER,” said Lord Portland to the Marchioness, as he entered her boudoir, with an open letter unconsciously grasped in his hand; “mother, you may marry me, if you like, to Leonora, this day, this hour, this moment, if you please it!”

“And whence this blessed change, my child? How comes it that in a moment you thus alter, and turn my heart from sorrow to rejoicement; from despair to hopeful anticipations of delight?”

“This, mother, is the cause;” and, as he spoke, he lifted up the letter which he held, and, while his trembling hand could scarcely hold it, he looked upon it, and he tried to smile, although a startling sigh escaped his pale and

ashy lip at the same moment; and he tottered to a seat, on which he sunk.

“It matters not, my son, the cause of an event so fraught with happiness to me and to your father: suffice it for me to know your determination. Shall I speak to Leonora, or will you?”

“Will I? Oh, mother!”

“Well, no, Alfred, dearest; I will speak, and well I know how happy she will be.”

“That pains me, mother; for I should not like her to build her hopes of happiness on my love.”

“And why not? Alfred, you must love her.”

“Never, never! My love is buried here!” And as he spoke he pressed his hand and the letter of Alice to his heart.

“No matter, no matter, my boy: time will heal those wounds. Rouse yourself, and tell me how shall I act.”

“You know best. Tell her, if she wishes, I will marry her. If she says yes, do what you

please, for I care not about the matter, but because it is the command and wish of an angel for me to please you."

"Alfred, Leonora has long expected this. Her father and I long since settled how matters should be; therefore, you need only fix the time, if it agrees with Leonora's inclinations."

"I think it had better take place to-morrow, mother."

"What, my child?"

"The marriage, if it must be."

"Alfred, are you mad?"

"Nearly so, I fear."

"You cannot think that Leonora will thus accept you, and without form or ceremony, or even a visit from yourself, thus marry you in a moment?"

"I care not. If she refuses me, it will be for the better; if not, mother, I cannot dally in my misery. I will not woo her, though I may wed her."

"As you please, Alfred; but I know that Leonora is so much attached to you, and her

father is so anxious for the connexion, that they will not delay you long. What shall I say in favour of your haste?"

"Say any thing. Say I am wretched—I am dying—I am"—

"No, Alfred, best beloved, and dearest child, I will not say what is untrue, or what would cause to me such misery. I will say you wish to go abroad."

"You may; but where shall I go?"

"Let Leonora settle first; you can then plead your wishes. But you will see her, dearest?"

"Not now, mother; when you fix all, I may venture to her with you."

"It will be but a sorry wooing, Alfred; nevertheless, it must be as you please. I can say that matters have been so long pending between the families, that the sooner the union was completed the better, and thus gain an early day."

"You can; if it is to be, the sooner it is done the better, for I doubt myself. Mother, when

I am gone, and when you think upon me, remember that only for the sake and peace of one lost to me for ever, did I consent to take the step of never-ending misery which I am about to do. Mother, you caused the ruin of Alice and of your child,—of me, who would have died for you.”

“For shame, Alfred. Why think upon the past? Look to the future; see the bright and dazzling prospects which open before you; look to the wealth which you will possess; remember the noble and ancient lineage to which you belong, and drive away from you those hateful whimsies which of late have seized upon your once firm and elastic mind.”

“Mother, my mind has lost the strength which once it boasted. Mine is no common case; and well I knew and dreaded that some calamity was decreed. Day and night, visions, hateful and relaxing, were presenting themselves to my distempered fancy, and full well have they been realized; for more of misery than what I have endured cannot fall upon me or upon

mine. As if I had not acutely suffered already, methought last night as restless and feverish I lay, courting the oblivious repose which I could not procure, that you had given to me a paradise to dwell in; I was surrounded and environed by all that could render life worth possessing;—Alice, as she was, was near me;—all things smiled upon us, and seemed to bask in the sunshine of our unchecked prosperity. You, too, was there, and those whom you most love and most confide in. We were the blest, and we were the happy, until a ‘change came o’er the spirit of my dream!’ Suddenly, the heavens lowered upon us; the sun withdrew his vivifying light;—the scene, lately so brilliant, so joyous, and resplendent, vanished, and I found myself cast upon the earth, writhing and tortured with more than mortal anguish. Methought a vista through the impenetrable gloom which surrounded me gave to my view a sight of Alice, seated where of late I had been, and as gay and gladsome as when first we met. The crown which had lain upon my head was upon her’s;

she was invested with the pomps and dignities which had before been crowded upon me, and I, alone, an outcast, and a maniac, bit the dust, and courted in vain a death I could not meet. Such dreams, and such as those, are what now greet me in my mockery of sleep. Mother, my brain is on fire; would I were 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' ”

“My Alfred,” said the Marchioness, as her voice trembled, and a universal tremor shook her frame; “my Alfred, dreams are phantasies of the brain to which I never could have believed that you would have given credence. Surely, my high-souled child will not turn a driveller, and descant upon the visions which an uneasy slumber may give rise to. I will leave you, and hasten to Leonora. I trust she may now consent, for of late she has looked coldly upon me, as if I could have caused you to forget her.”

“Mother, when will you visit Lady Arlingham?”

“It may be that I will see her ere I return. Do you want her?”

“I do, mother; but you could do my errand. Tell her when next she writes to Alice, she can inform her that I did as she commanded me, and though it will kill me, I will marry.”

Lady Cornwall hurried from her son, for conscience was hurrying her on to cowardice. Ere long she was with her future daughter-in-law, whose cold and placid manner seemed to receive no enlivening impulse from the presence of the Marchioness.

Lady Leonora Saville was the only child of Lord Pettigrew, whose immense revenues ranked him amongst the wealthiest of the British aristocracy. He was dotingly fond of his daughter, and had vested in her all of his fortunes which were not strictly entailed.

His family was not old, and though wealth, and a peculiar part which he had taken in politics, had procured for him his elevation to the peerage, still he felt the power and strength of blood and of connexions, and joyfully hailed

the prospect of an alliance, so noble and illustrious as his child's marriage with Lord Portland.

Many had been his dreads and doubts concerning the ultimate success of his wishes, and he had, with Lady Leonora, begun to despair of the long wished-for proposal. Lady Cornwall, as well as her husband, Lord Pettigrew knew to be in his interests, but he almost feared that their representations and wishes would be unavailing.

During his residence in Russia he had endeavoured to aid the matter, and throw the young people continually in each other's way. Lady Leonora herself, exceedingly anxious to become Lady Portland, had seconded her father's best and most powerful exertions; but the Earl, safe in the fervent passion which he cherished, was proof against all their allurements, though they were too palpable to be concealed from his observation.

Lady Leonora Saville was neither pretty, nor was she ugly, she was fair and gentle; but she

was cold, selfish, and ungenerous; accustomed from her birth to adulation, and the most tender and subservient care, she thought alone of her own comfort and her own pleasures. For those connected with her she felt love; if the cold, selfish feeling which arose from knowing how she was adored by those around her could be termed love; she loved them because they belonged to herself, and were necessary to herself. Self was the main spring of her actions; and if she married Lord Portland, without a doubt she would be fond of him because he was hers.

To this selfish being, so utterly unworthy of her noble child, did the ambitious Marchioness come to barter for her wealth.

With her usual smile, and a faint blush, did Leonora Saville listen to the mother as she pleaded the cause of her son, delighted and pleased, as far as she could experience or evince either delight or pleasure; and Lady Cornwall found it no difficult task to get an early day fixed for the celebration of the nuptials. The bride elect neither manifested surprise nor asto-

nishment at the absence or haste of her lover, and took for granted the truth of what Lady Cornwall wished her to believe.

Lord Pettigrew at once entered into the arrangements, settlements, &c., for, in fact, his Lordship had so long settled upon the propriety of the alliance, that he had had all difficulties overcome, and matters put in train to expedite the business should it ever have a chance of occurring. The Marchioness, however, with all her haste contrived to make herself quite certain of the extent of Lady Leonora's property, which she found to be even greater than she had imagined it to be.

On her way home she called on the Countess, and, having disclosed all the affair to her, delivered the message of Portland. Lady Arlingham felt shocked at the manner in which he had yielded his assent to his marriage, though she felt happy at the prospect of it.

"I trust, Maud," she said to her friend, "that they will be happy."

“ And why should they not, Adelaide? they will have every thing that can insure it.”

“ But happiness does not dwell in a heart ill at ease, nor is it of necessity the companion of worldly goods. For myself I can speak, and I think for you too, Maude. Ambition, and the attainment of our most ambitious wishes, have not tended to promote our contentment. Portland is this moment as much fascinated by the image and recollection of Alice, as at the first moment of their meeting. The ice of Lady Leonora will scarcely cool his burning fever; and, Heaven knows, she is indeed a frigid mortal, unfit (save for her fortunes) to be his wife. However, we must hope for the best, and keep Portland to the point.”

“ Adelaide, Portland dreamt a dream akin to truth I fear, for some forebodings of coming evil are upon my mind; though why, I know not. Methinks the sun of our prosperity is nearly setting.”

“ You giving way to doubts and fears,

Maude? Is it at last come to this? If so, I too must dread. But why should you thus fancy evil?"

"Simply because I do. Farewell now: when next we meet you shall fear too."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE party at Dudley Grove passed, as all parties do, in stupid every-day sort of houses; every one was tired, and no one was amused. Poor Mrs. Dudley strove to rouse herself, and gain fortitude after her slumber, to descend to her guests; but her courage failed her, and she was glad to remain where the terrifying glances of her daughters could not rest upon her.

Alice, as soon as she could well get away, retired to her room, and engaged herself in writing to Lady Arlingham. The subject on which she wrote was one of deep interest to both, and a late hour saw her still at her desk. She was preparing to leave off, and had just closed her letter, when Sir Leopold entered the

apartment: he was evidently in a state of intoxication; and, though Alice was shocked and horrified at the sight, she had been of late too often acquainted with such scenes to feel much surprise.

He was talkative and noisy, and not all the persuasions of his wife could induce him to go to bed. Tired and wretched, she at length gave up all idea of being able to make him do as she pleased, and she herself retired to rest. For some hours she lay awake, disturbed by the noise and clamour which the inebriated man caused in the room, and harassed by her own unquiet feelings.

At last sleep surprised her, and not until the warbling of a thrush, which had perched on a bough beneath her window, gave intimation of the arisen day, did she awake. She was alone; and as she found herself so, she remembered the state in which her husband had been when she had gone to bed, with a feeling of dread, lest in his intemperance he might have fallen on the floor, and while there imbibed an additional

cold; she arose, the room was perfectly dark, and she was obliged, before she could discern the objects about her, to unbar the shutters. The full light of morn shone in upon her; and, as she turned to look around for Sir Leopold, it illumined the cold and startling countenance of a corpse. There was he, the proud and the ennobled, a clod of the valley, a breathless, livid, inanimate body. In the height of his season of intemperance, in the dark and "stilly night," his soul had passed away; and awful was it for her, his wedded wife, to ask, where was it then?

Her first impulse was to rush to him, to seize his hand, to press her cheek upon his icy lips, and try to catch the breath which might not yet have flown. The chilling hand dropped heavily from her grasp, and her own breathings were all that told of life in that chamber of death. She rushed from the apartment, and flew to that of Mr. Dudley; her violent knocks, and scarcely suppressed screams, brought him instantly to the door. Her alarm prevented her being able to

tell him what had occurred; but, as she motioned him to follow her, he partly surmised the truth.

.. He was unspeakably shocked as he beheld the terrible reality, and used every method within his power to recal animation. Physicians were instantly summoned, and they at once declared that life must have flown some hours ere Alice had become aware of the event.

She was in a state bordering on distraction; she accused herself of having been accessory to her husband's death, by not having called for assistance at the time that he had refused to retire to rest, and not having compelled him to do so despite his uproarious conduct. It was an appalling thought, that during the hours of her repose, he should have yielded up his spirit, uncomforted, uncared for, and neglected. But the medical attendants declared it to be their decided and united opinion, that apoplexy had been long threatening ere it had seized upon its victim, and that, though it might have been for a time warded off by temperance and self-denial,

still it would have, without doubt, hovered around him, and carried him off in some equally sudden and unexpected manner.

The interment and all other necessary arrangements were conducted by Mr. Dudley, who, proud of the consequence which such an event would give him, spared neither labour nor exertion in the matter. Sir Leopold's heir was a gentleman who resided near Lindorf Court, but, as the baronet never liked him, Alice had never seen him. However, on his being made acquainted with the death of his relative, and the melancholy circumstances connected with it, he immediately hastened to Dudley Grove, and by his kind and conciliating attentions soon found his way to the confidence and esteem of Alice.

His wife had accompanied him, and the widow was not less pleased with her than with her husband. They both sedulously endeavoured to console her, for, though it cannot be supposed that grief, for the loss of such a being as Sir Leopold was, could operate much on Alice, still her mental sufferings were great as she dwelt upon

the manner of his decease. His will was in England; but she knew, that previously to his undertaking his journey to Ireland he had executed one, in which he had left her every thing, save his entailed properties, which were most extensive, and sadly wanted and required by the person to whom they had fallen.

He was the only son of Sir Leopold's younger and only brother, who had made a match which highly incensed the baronet and wounded his pride. However, the gentleman had lived long and happily with his amiable though not aristocratic partner, and had at his death left barely a sufficiency to support his child in the rank of life to which he was entitled; and though he had made every exertion to obtain an interview with his uncle, he never could succeed, and had become at length possessor of a property and estates which he never dreamt of appropriating, even in idea, to himself.

His lady was with him. Charmed and fascinated with Lady Lindorf, she warmly and hospitably pressed her to remove to their dwelling

after the funeral of Sir Leopold. As she was situated, she gladly accepted the proffered kindness, and glad to escape from the troublesome and tormenting Dudleys, agreed to accompany them home, until she made arrangements concerning her return.

Great was the annoyance experienced by Mr. Dudley and his family, when they found the result of Mr. (now Sir Robert) Lindorf's visit to the Grove. However, the magnificent return which Alice made to them, for the trouble which Sir Leopold and she had caused them, was so great and unexpected, that they could not dare to offer any opposition to her departure.

Mrs. Robert Lindorf had been exceedingly pretty, and her soothing and affectionate manners won the warm heart of Alice. As Alice surveyed the picture of domestic happiness which awaited her at the cottage where the Lindorfs dwelt, she experienced still more deeply the truth of the saying, that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Of this world's goods

the Lindorfs had but little, but with that little how much did they do, and how many did they relieve. Their family was large, five sons and two daughters, all beautiful and lovely children; brought up completely, and educated by parents who felt the responsibility of the trust confided to them. They were pictures of health and happiness; and Alice felt her heart warm to the little beings, of whom (though so nearly connected with her) she had never before heard.

The extreme regularity and neatness of the cottage suited exactly the taste of Alice, who saw each day more to admire in it, and in its inhabitants. Time passed leisurely on, and a visit from Mr. and Mrs. O'Grady helped to cheer Alice, and restore her to peace of mind. The O'Gradys were well acquainted with the Lindorfs, and therefore their society was highly gratifying to them. The company of Alice, which was sought for by her old friends, who had hoped to induce her to revisit Kneuchtna-noon, was withheld, as she determined to remain with her new friend until the return of Sir

Robert from London, whither he was called to take possession of his newly-acquired wealth. But Alice proposed hastening to them afterwards, and remaining with them during the first year of her widowhood.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A FEW mornings after Lord Portland's marriage, he sat with his bride apparently in the act of breakfasting, though an observant spectator could perceive that not a morsel passed his parched and ashen lips. His cheeks, sunken and hollow, bore the vivid and brilliant tinge of consumption, while his thin and trembling hand could scarcely support the weight of a beautiful and fragile *sévre* cup, which, from time to time, he mechanically raised to his mouth, although unable to partake of its contents.

His bride, unconscious of the situation in which he was, sat opposite to him, unmindful of every thing but the comfort of the meal, which, with the assistance of a capital English appetite,

she was partaking of. She never thought or imagined that the being before her was sinking rapidly into the grave, and if she had dreamt of such a calamity, it would not have prevented her indulging herself in the creature-comfort which she was about.

True it was, that cold as she herself was, she had looked for less frigidity in a husband, and a little more affection than had been evinced towards her in the first days of her married state. But, as she was always cool, calculating, and placid, she looked forward to time changing the indifferent bridegroom into the more affectionate husband. Poor Leonora! she knew but little of men and men's ways, when thus she whispered deceitfully to herself.

"Here are the papers, Alfred," said she, as the entrance of a servant with the mail-bag for a moment recalled the Earl from his meditations. He took one, but it dropped unread from his grasp, and he did not seem to notice it again. Leonora drew another from its envelope, and commenced casting her eyes listlessly over it.

At length a paragraph struck her, and she exclaimed,—

“ Alfred, do you know any of the Lindorfs ?”

The husband started, looked scrutinizingly at his wife, and made some indistinct reply.

“ Because,” continued the young countess, “ I see here the name mentioned in some way or other, and I heard Lady Arlingham often speak of her friend Lady Lindorf, so I thought you might know something of her.”

“ Is she——Alice mentioned there ?” said the Earl, absolutely springing from his seat, in breathless agitation ; which was not, however, remarked by his wife, who continued reading ; at last she said, without looking off the paper—

“ Ah ! by-the-bye, I see it is the person whom Lady Arlingham speaks of.”

The Earl drew his breath with difficulty, and a tightness, akin to suffocation, was upon his breast, as he tried to ask—

“ And what of her, Leonora ?”

“ Oh, let me see,—dead, I think ;—no ! no !”

She was roused by a deep groan, which seemed

to come from the heart of the Earl, but his face was hidden from her view by his clasped hands. He seemed to dread or to expect some awful calamity; and, for once, Leonora appeared a little—very little, alarmed and excited.

“What is the matter, Alfred, dear?—shall I ring for a glass of water?”

“No, no! I have a dreadful head-ache. Read on.”

“Oh, if it is but a head-ache, you had better have a glass of soda-water. Lady Lindorf is not dead, but her husband is. I see by this that he died the very day on which we were married.” And as her Ladyship spoke, she sighed, not at the death of Sir Leopold (for on his or any other person’s decease she never threw away a thought), but at the remembrance of how small a share of joy attended the celebration of her own nuptials.

But her communication struck as deeply to the heart of her husband as if it had been the death of his own Alice that had been recorded in place of that of Sir Leopold. How stunning

had been the intimation which was so carelessly given by her whom he had wedded at the time ; nay, perhaps the very moment that had left his love unshackled. He writhed in agony inconceivable,—he struck his aching temples with his clenched and burning hands,—and he sobbed aloud, in the bitterness and extremity of his affliction. With undisturbed calmness his callous and insensible wife inquired the reason of his sudden emotion. He did not answer her ; he did not hear her ; but he loathed her.

As the paroxysm of sorrow yielded to bodily weakness, the Earl was conveyed to his bed, from whence for days and weeks he was unable to stir. The hereditary and threatening bane of the Cornwall family seemed rapidly undermining him ; and all who beheld him noticed the too sure advance of corroding consumption. His mother, who had been summoned to him, witnessed with intense anguish the effects of her own arrangements, and bitterly cursed the hour that induced her child to acquiesce in her desires.

As for Lady Portland, she rested satisfied with the opinion of the physicians, and in accordance with their wishes, and her own inclinations, avoided seeing the Earl, and committed him to the care of hirelings, who, luckily for him, cared more for his health and welfare than did she, his selfish wife, who sat and read, or worked, or amused herself as usual, without annoying herself by thinking on the sufferings of the wretched invalid.

But Lady Arlingham had accompanied the Marchioness, when the latter had received intimation of the state of her son; and in her might be remarked the deep interest which she felt for the child of her bosom friend. Almost it would seem as if she had been the mother. The suppressed groan of agony, as she noted the rapid progress of decaying strength in the young nobleman; her woe-worn and grief-stricken carriage; her tender soothing, and consoling acts of love and of affection, as she incessantly tended the couch of sickness,—all, all expressed more deeply than words had power

to do the force and depth of her devoted attachment.

And with what ecstasy did she mark the first deceitful showings forth of returning health. How did she hail each varying symptom of coming strength, and each consolatory answer from the invalid. In her love might be seen the pure spirit of disinterested affection; while in the more evident and visible emotion of the Marchioness was traced the pride of lineage, the pomps of the world, the anxious looking to futurity. For him she felt perchance as a mother; but too surely did she dread the loss of an heir as much, if not more, than that of a son.

But, with the invariable deceitfulness of the disorder which was cankering in the breast of its victim, he regained for a time a comparative degree of health. He was able to rise, and with the aid of his attendants, to venture from his room. Lady Portland met him as if a cold, or a trifling ailment, had for a temporary space hindered their meeting. No fond greetings

awaited him, no tender glances of inquiring affection, no soothing demonstrations of delight at again seeing him. All was quiet and composed on her part; while on his the flashing eye, the throbbing pulse, and the trembling frame, denoted that he felt acutely that he had wronged her, in giving a cold and passionless heart, a broken and a ruined spirit.

And had Leonora had a heart, or feeling, or generosity, surely her lot would have been a sad one. It is a cruel thing to win a wife, and, when wedded, refuse to love her. It is a deep and a treacherous act to take a young, confiding heart, and promise to love and cherish it, and then discard it as valueless. But with Alfred it was otherwise. No winning treachery or deceit guided him on to marriage; Leonora knew him to be cold to her, indifferent, and unloving. She had heard a tale of a broken heart, and she had turned from it without interest; and why? Because she, the Lady Saville, the magnificently dowered, the proud, and the noble, should and would scorn all thoughts

and all ideas of a rival in the affections of him whom she had chosen for a husband. No one could dare to dispute with her his heart. She did not even know who had been his first love ; neither did she care, nor did she suspect. She was a being endued with all that is necessary to life, save that she was heartless.

She sat, engrossed by some trifling work, which to her appeared a matter of intense importance. She did not heed the startling cough, or the unquiet breathing of the Earl ; she noticed not the exertions of the Countess to arrange his pillows, or adjust his coverings ; she did not see the vain attempt to take the nourishment pressed upon him by his mother ; nor did she seem, after a few moments, to notice that he was present.

He closed his eyes as if to sleep, but it was to think. Thought, that never-resting torment of our mortal system, how does it worry and distress the sick, the weak, the languid, and the dying ! Even when our bodies are debilitated, and brought to the very lowest ebb of weakness

and suffering, how does it retain its dreadful strength to harrow and upbraid! He thought of Alice—the sole and only being on whom he could think. He thought of her in her first youth, when but a few short months since he beheld her, a being of light and beauty. He thought of her, separated from him by a barrier over which he could not pass; and he thought of her when she had urged him to take upon him the galling yoke which she herself was bearing. All, all seemed to him as nothing, when he rested on the remembrance of her freedom, her power to become his, his right to call upon her to fulfil her broken vows; and then, oh misery unheard of! to lose her at that moment by his own restless impetuosity and intemperance. To think that she, his *own, own* Alice, his first, his only love, should thus be lost through his own means, and only his, for ever!

The keen glances of Lady Arlingham at once noted what was passing in the mind of the apparent slumberer; and too well she knew

that such were the only passages in his past existence that would ever have power to retain their places in his future recollections. Lady Portland rose to get some silks, which, as she could not find, she quitted the room to search for, and while absent, the Countess took the hand of the Earl, and whispered,—

“Dearest Alfred, why this mental torture? Speak, dearest, to me; surely you should now love me well enough to confide in me.”

A pressure of her hand proved that he understood her meaning, but he was silent.

“Portland, you cannot disguise from me that of our Alice you thus are sadly thinking.”

“Our Alice!” answered he;—“mine, never!”

“And, Alfred, you were willing to give her up, to resign your claims on her, and take a wife whom you selected.”

“Selected—ah! no! I was worked upon, I was duped, and mine was not the fault.”

“Alfred, you are married;—a young and noble wife demands your tenderest care. Remember the responsibility of the trust you have

accepted, and prove yourself triumphant over vain regrets."

"I am married—yes, I know full well the depth of that keen misery. But my care cannot be given to her that calls me husband. The grave is open to receive me; it yawns for its victim, which will not long be withheld; and while I tarry here my thoughts cannot be on her. She will not miss me, nor will she grieve for me; her 'ways are not my ways, neither are her thoughts mine.'"

"Portland, she is gentle and kind; and when you know her more, you will dislike her less. Believe me, her worth is deep, though it may not be apparent."

"It may be so. I take your words for granted, for I know them to be kind. But one thought obtrudes—Alice does not know that I am ma——."

"Married, you would say, Alfred. Perhaps not, neither is it necessary. I know not where she has been since Sir Leopold's death, or I should write to her myself."

“ You must know, Lady Arlingham ; you must find out her residence. She will need friendship and affection. Ah ! how blest can you be, for you can administer both to her.”

“ And she shall have both, dearest Alfred. You may trust me to care for Alice as mine own child.”

The Countess ceased speaking, for at the moment the door opened, and the Marchioness, accompanied by her daughter-in-law, entered the apartment.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ALICE remained for some months with the Lindorfs, who each day became more fondly attached to her; and she soon lost all wish to separate herself from them. Sir Robert had gone to England, and had been invested with the estates to which he had succeeded; and on his return he had, with the concurrence of his wife, determined to rebuild the dilapidated mansion at Lindorf Court, and there take up his residence, in preference to the more cultivated and more aristocratic dwellings which now pertained to him in England.

Alice felt pleased at the arrangement; for Ireland held out to her more inducements to remain, than did England to return. She had

passed the days of her happiness in Erin, and too much of misery was connected with her absence from it to allow her to wish for a repetition.

The Lindorfs and the O'Gradys were to her as much as she desired of society, and between the two families she purposed to pass the greater part of her time, if not all; for both strongly pleaded that their houses should be her home. She had but one friend to regret, amongst the myriads that had sought to be such to her, in the common acceptation of that word: that only one was Lady Arlingham. An interest unaccountable, and an affection unbounded, existed in her heart for the Countess. Notwithstanding the heartless and almost inhuman manner in which she had behaved towards her in former times, when she had blasted her hopes in this world, she firmly believed that the Countess loved her, and that, too, with sincerity. She had proved her affection; and as she recalled the exertions of that fascinating woman to save her from destruction, and to counsel her for her

happiness and welfare, she forgot her previous perfidy, and longed again ardently to behold her.

She was welcomed with warmest tenderness at Kneuchtnanoon; and though the remembrances of that lonely, isolated spot were acute and saddening, still a melancholy pleasure was attached to them. Young Mansfield was with his uncle; and though he had been unaware of the strength and depth of the affection which had existed between Alice and the Earl, he had surmised, in part, the truth, and therefore forbore to make any allusions to him in her presence. She had never heard that Lord Portland was married; and though sometimes a wish to know if that event had really taken place would arise in her mind, she strove to suppress it, and banish from her all thoughts of him.

She had been a widow six months, and had been nearly half that time at Kneuchtnanoon, when the weather became exceedingly severe and harsh. Snow had fallen in immense quantities, and the roads about Kneuchtnanoon were

nearly impassable. Mansfield had been from home for many days, and the O'Gradys were, with Alice, enjoying the luxurious warmth of a superb turfen fire, and laughing at the joyous mirth of little Arthur Lindorf, whom Alice had adopted, when Frederick Mansfield arrived, dripping and shivering. His presence gave, as it always did, increased pleasure to his relations; and as soon as his wet habiliments had been exchanged for dry ones, and that he had imbibed a little heat, he addressed Mr. O'Grady :—

“ Uncle, I have taken the liberty of inviting some friends of mine here.”

“ Well, my boy,” replied the old man, “ they shall be welcome. When do they come ?”

“ To-morrow.”

“ To-morrow ! Why, Frederick, if they are so near to us, you should have brought them on this evening; perhaps the snow may increase to-night, and render their travelling to-morrow impossible. Who are they, my boy ?”

“ An invalid and his wife, with some two or three attendants ; they are weather-bound at ———, and the gentleman is, indeed, extremely ill. He is an old friend of yours, and a kind and warm one of mine. It is Lord Portland.”

As Mansfield stopped, he looked towards Alice, and a faint blush for a second spread over her countenance ; it was but momentary, for the strength of mind which she had always possessed had of late been strengthened, and she calmly listened to the remainder of his recital. The O’Gradys were, of course, much astonished, and at first could scarcely believe Frederick, who, however, continued :—

“ The Earl is alarmingly ill. He and the Countess left England to visit some friends of her ladyship’s, about six weeks since. He had been very severely attacked by cough and general debility in England, shortly after his marriage, and on his partial recovery had acceded to Lady Portland’s wishes of coming to Ireland. The journey was too much for him,

at this inclement season of the year; and I much fear he will scarcely ever regain his former strength."

Many were the regrets of the O'Gradys, as they heard the melancholy account of Frederick, and many were the plans and regulations projected and put in forwardness by them for the comfortable accommodation of their young and valued friend. Poor Alice, destined to misfortune from her very birth, how keenly and how bitterly did she feel the announcement! To hear that he was married, she had expected; but to hear of his miserable condition was indeed anguish — poignant, poignant anguish. She heard not the words afterwards uttered around her, but she left her friends as soon as she found herself able to stand, and in the silence and solitude of her chamber bethought her of herself and one still deeply, still devotedly adored.

He had, indeed, in an evil hour acquiesced in his wife's wish to go to Ireland, and though totally unfit for such an undertaking, had left the care and solicitude of his mother and Lady

Arlingham, to accompany Leonora in her journey. Divested of the watchful eyes of friendship and affection, he soon began again to sink under the careless guardianship of his wife. Cold attacked his already decaying lungs, and a damp bed hastened the attacks of the enemy that had before assailed him. He became worse and worse, and was proceeding by slow stages to ———, from whence he had resolved to embark, and hasten to those who would care for him and comfort him.

They had been blocked up by snow at the most miserable inn in the most wretched village that can be imagined; and there had chance driven Frederick Mansfield, to the unspeakable consolation of the Earl, who gladly and joyfully acceded to his proposal of endeavouring to reach Kneuchtnanoon, and there remaining until his health and the weather would permit a change of scene.

Frederick had not hinted that Alice was at Kneuchtnanoon; for, as he was unaware to what length their affection had gone, he was

unwilling to add in any way to his Lordship's agitation. He had immediately set off to prepare his uncle and aunt for their unexpected visitors, and had arranged to set men to work to open a communication and passage through the accumulated snow.

Fortunately, the night was without any accession to the already dense mass of snow, and the Earl reached Kneuchtnanoon as well as his friends could expect. He was greeted by Mr. O'Grady cordially, and as he presented his wife to him, a flush of pain, mental and bodily, was apparent to the old man, who strove to rally the spirits of a being whom he too clearly perceived was soon to be released from earth and misery.

The cold and stiff return which Lady Portland made to the kind courtesies of the O'Gradys chilled them at once, and displayed to them the sort of person to whom the Earl had connected himself. They noted her careless and uninterested manner towards her rapidly-sinking husband, and they absolutely hated her for it. It was in vain they sought to interest her for

him, or to draw from her what was required for him, or what attentions were requisite. Her invariable coldness and repulsive manner soon obliged them to give up the task, and try themselves to administer comfort to the sufferer.

The Earl, fatigued by his journey, and debilitated by thoughts and recollections which crowded upon him, retired immediately to his room and bed, whither he was carefully attended by Frederick Mansfield and his aunt, and all the care which affection could devise was rendered to him who soon would cease to require it. Alice was therefore enabled to meet Lady Portland with seeming composure, and to join her friends at dinner-hour.

From her window she had seen Lord Portland, as, weak and suffering, he had been taken from the carriage and conveyed up the steps. She had listened to the heavy footsteps of those who bore him up to his room, as they passed her door and entered the adjoining one; and as she could distinctly hear the groan of agony which escaped from his lips, she pressed her

throbbing heart, and gave way to bursts of anguish and of sorrow, which convulsed her frame, and drove her brain almost to madness. Her measure of sorrow was unfilled till then, and oh ! the deep, deep agony of that dreadful hour, as she sat alone in misery.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE Marquis of Cornwall, who had been for years in a declining state, was at length pronounced by his physicians to be within a few hours of his dissolution. Lady Cornwall received the announcement with but few of the feelings which would be supposed to animate the breast of a wife for a husband who had been at all times one devoted to her will and pleasure, and a being with whom she had been connected by the most sacred and endearing of ties for nearly forty years.

Lady Cornwall had been a girl of most surpassing loveliness, and had—added to youth, beauty, and fashion—a long and noble line of untainted ancestry. Her sister Alice, married

to General Beauclerk, and the protectress of Alice Lindorf, was less beautiful, though much more amiable than the Marchioness. A dove-like softness and a benign temper contrasted Alice with the more proud and masculine Maude, who from infancy enforced submission and demanded homage. A match such as her union with Lord Cornwall was one well calculated to keep alive her impetuous inclinations, and her overweening pride of birth. He was a fine, manly, intelligent being, full of life and spirits; and the temperament of his transcendently lovely wife suited well with him, at least until their union brought them in contact, when, to his infinite chagrin, he discovered that Maude in all things must be the ruler, and he the ruled. Daughters had been born to him, four in succession, and still the son that he yearned for was withheld. In vain had he wished and looked forward to one who would succeed to his ancient honours and lineage, and sustain the fast-decaying and ennobled house of Cornwall.

At last, when all hope had been taken from

him, an heir was born,—a sweet and gentle child, unlike at least his mother. No violent or turbulent passions ruffled the calm serenity of that boy's noble and princely bosom. No overweening pride claimed the right and power to command obedience to his wishes. No pomps or vanities in after life had power to tempt him from the good to turn to evil. No, the young Earl of Portland shone above his fellows, as one destined to be loved and to be respected.

To this boy the Earl bore a love stronger—ten thousand times stronger—than that which had existed in his heart for his daughters, who all, endowed with their mother's beauty, had fallen under the remorseless hand of death, save one. She, frail as was she fair, had been an idol with her parents, and an object of admiration to all who beheld her. But, “Frailty, thy name is Woman!” Poor luckless girl, scarcely had she become a wife,—the pride, the boast, the adoration of a doting husband, when she forfeited her claim to that title, and the heart of that husband, by casting away her peace, her

virtue, and her innocence, on one who scarcely in the end would grant to her a claim on his ignoble and unworthy name, wherewith to screen her from the scorn and contumely of the world.

This dreadful disgrace was felt acutely by the Marquis, and it hurt the pride of the Marchioness right deeply too. But still the growing beauty of their son, his highly-gifted and enthusiastic mind, his tender and affectionate deportment, were strong and powerful consolations. In him they beheld the supporter of their dignity, the strength of their family, and an ornament to the world. Such indeed had he bid fair to be; but all had been lost, all had been destroyed of this fair and noble promise. And by whom? By his own—own mother! By her whom he had so tenderly and so devotedly loved! She it was who had hurled to the dust his prospects of the future, and his peace of the present. She it was who had caused the blight and the ruin, the breaking of two young, fond hearts.

But it matters not to recal the past. The Marquis was departing, full of years and honours. One only stain had sullied the purity of that honour; years could not efface it from his otherwise upright bosom. Remorse had done her work, and had in the end effected more than had time. But, full of hope that the deeds of the flesh would be atoned for by One whose blood cleanseth from all sin, he died, leaving behind him a noble, though somewhat embarrassed patrimony, and a heartfelt blessing on him whom fate had called to succeed him.

Lady Cornwall observed the outward signs and formula of grief, though the inward feeling at the time was wanting. Not but that she had loved the Marquis, but that love had long passed away, and was in her remembrance but as a dream. It was judged advisable that Lord Portland should be kept in ignorance of the death of his father; for, from the depth of his attachment to that parent, it was feared that a sudden announcement of his decease, in his unprepared state, might cause a revulsion in

his system fatal to the Earl, from whom the reports were most alarming. Lady Portland herself had written to Lady Cornwall, and she expressed herself as looking incessantly for his departure from his unceasing sufferings. Nothing of the unspeakable anguish of a desponding wife appeared in her announcement of the intelligence; nothing of the deep and bitter feelings of a nearly widowed bride were perceptible in her cold and studied letter to the nearly childless mother of her young and noble husband; but the information was conveyed as callously and as heartlessly as if the tidings were those of indifference and unconcern.

The epistle of her daughter-in-law was still in the hand of the Marchioness, when a visitor requested permission to speak a few words with her. At first, she of course declined the interview, as her recently widowed state had precluded her seeing any persons, save those connected with her by either the ties of consanguinity or friendship.

The person, however, would not take a re-

fusal, and persevered in his demands for admittance, until the Marchioness was obliged to consent to his wishes, and accordingly the stranger was shown into her presence.

He was a fine and intelligent-looking young man, tall, and finely proportioned. His features were more expressive than handsome, and were set off by an excellent and most benevolent expression of countenance, which could not fail of impressing every beholder with a true and favourable opinion of his candid and open disposition.

As he seated himself opposite to Lady Cornwall, a slight appearance of embarrassment was visible, and she concluded immediately that some petition was about to be preferred; but she soon found that far otherwise was the case, and that the being before her was as independent in mind as in appearance.

“My name, Lady Cornwall, is Sutherland.”

The vivid and brilliant rouge upon the Marchioness's cheeks was instantly deadened by the colour which rose over her entire face, as her

visitor had pronounced the word "Sutherland." Her evident emotion was perceptible, for her companion, with a faint smile, continued—

"My name, I dare say, has conveyed to your Ladyship an idea of the business on which I have come, and which has compelled me to force myself upon you."

"I surmise, Sir," replied Lady Cornwall, with a cold and haughty manner, that by your claiming the name of Sutherland, you boast of some connexion to the family of my deceased Lord. But why you should thus trouble yourself, and intrude on my privacy at this time, is beyond my comprehension."

"I surely do claim the name of Sutherland, because it was that of my father, your Ladyship's brother-in-law; and because, as the connexion has long been seemingly forgotten by your Ladyship and my late uncle, I think it necessary to bring it before you, for reasons which you best can know, and best can appreciate."

"I cannot pretend, Sir, to be able to solve

your reasons in any way; neither can I, as I again assert, comprehend what has caused me the honour of this unlooked-for visit."

"Then I shall take upon myself the unpleasing task of informing your Ladyship," replied Captain Sutherland, with a sarcastic movement of his upper lip; while Lady Cornwall in vain strove to summon courage and resolution. Her heart beat thickly,—a damp and chilling sensation pervaded her whole frame, and the room in which she was seemed rapidly revolving with the chair on which she was seated.

"Know, then, most noble Lady," spoke Captain Sutherland, in a grave and solemn voice, while his keen and penetrating eyes were fixed intently on the Marchioness, who in vain strove to look the composure she could not feel, "that I have ascertained the truth of the communication which you are about to hear. No doubts or surmises can for a moment be entertained of its veracity. Before I dared thus to intrude upon you I deemed it right, and my

bounden duty, to overcome all suspicion, all doubt; and to make myself master of a subject, which is to me one of considerable importance, while to you it must be one of pain. For the sake of one person, with whom chance has made me acquainted, I indeed sorrow right deeply at the part which I am compelled to act. For your sake, I should too have grieved, but that your own demeanour towards me and mine has marked you as unworthy to be saved from the fate which even now is traced out for you. Lady, you will pardon the heated and angry words of an injured and an aggrieved man, when you think upon the wrongs you yourself have caused. I come to crave no boon, to ask no gift, to sue for no benevolence; if I did, too well I know what would be the result. Experience has taught me that I should be spurned, I should be scorned; and the paltry pittance which by law I claimed, would be withheld until force had grasped it, more as a deed of charity than as a right. You know that I do not come

before you as a beggar, or as a claimant for aught that is not mine. You know too well my rights, to question them. For the sake of peace, for the sake of one of the noblest of created beings, I tender to you the means of shielding yourself from disgrace, your avowed child from ruin and from ignominy."

"Your words, Sir, are to me parables which my understanding cannot translate. I know not what claims you can pretend to; neither can I think what disgrace I have to dread, or what ignominy is reserved for the present Marquis of Cornwall. If you had any communications to make to him, you had better have conveyed them to his Lordship through the medium of his law advisers, than to have thus rudely dared to come before me."

"And would you wound your child by thus barbarously tearing from him at once his hopes and expectations? Would you leave it to heartless and uninterested persons to acquaint him with the painful and goading truth? Ah, Lady

Cornwall, no mother's love dwells in your heart for Lord Portland, if thus you could bear to have him treated."

"As I cannot guess, Mr. Sutherland, what the tidings may be of which you profess to be the bearer, I repeat, that the Marquis should be the person to whom you should detail them, and not to me; at least, in my present afflicted state."

"The tidings are true, nevertheless, though you may deny your knowledge of them, or perhaps you may have forgotten them. But the world must shortly know what is the case, unless you grant a means whereby the Marquis may be saved."

"How saved, Sir? Your words indeed are mysterious."

"Mysteries that soon will be made evident, Lady Cornwall. A court of justice will not help to keep secret longer that which has so long been hidden."

"Explain yourself, Sir. What mean you?"

"I will not pretend longer to withhold the

fact from your Ladyship. I come here to claim my right to that title which your avowed son now holds, by virtue of your gross injustice and deceit."

"My avowed son, Sir, claims what by right he is entitled to, as the child of myself and Lord Cornwall; nor know I with what words or treatment to revenge on you the insult which you have committed towards my son. Begone, Sir! Never again dare to force yourself upon me or upon Lord Cornwall."

"I shall leave you; but, mark me, proud lady! it were better for you to soothe than to irritate, where so much is pending. For the sake of the noble and princely youth whom you still persist in calling son, think, before it is too late, that the claim by which he holds my patrimony is a vain and spurious one; and that, ere long, it shall be wrenched from him, and nought left to him, through your means, but a disgraced and ignominious name, the sole boast of his illegitimacy."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“THE hand of death is on me, Alice! Ere long I shall be a clod of the valley, away from pain and suffering, freed from the toils and sorrows of this vain world. My latter days have indeed been cheered, nay, blest, by your beloved and comforting presence — a charm which only had the power now to console me. Ah, Alice! methinks the time is not now distant when we shall meet in that bright and glorious land where our souls shall be united, and the anguish of the past forgotten.”

The tears of Alice fell on the shrunken and attenuated hand which lay clasped in hers. It

was cold and damp; and as the warm drops of affection trickled upon it, its sinking owner turned to Alice, and continued:—

“No fears now, my Alice, can intrude upon your pure and sinless mind, to mar the intercourse which now exists between us. No doubts can now arise, to check the warmth of that love which is now ours. Ah, dearest and best! as I gaze upon you thus fondly and thus tenderly, I think the past hath come again; and fain would I exhale my struggling breath beside thee.”

Alice could but weep, for the progressive decaying of her former lover was but too evident. Her heart swelled at the mention of the past, when she recalled the life, the energy, the beauty, and the animation of him who now, stretched upon the bed of death, lay wan and feeble, and prepared to render up the life which fast was ebbing.

She had seen him on the day after his arrival at Kneuchtnanoon. His wife had told him of

her being there, and, glad to be rid of the trouble of amusing him, had gladly hailed his wish to see the widowed Lady Lindorf. Pained and terrified, Alice could scarcely be induced to accede to the desire of the invalid that she should visit him; but when his request was backed by the earnest entreaties of Mr. O'Grady and his wife, she could not bring herself longer to withhold the pleasure which he coveted of once again beholding her.

Disgusted with the conduct of the now Marchioness of Cornwall, Mrs. O'Grady had taken upon herself the task of nursing and attending the Marquis. By degrees, as Alice perceived the coming symptoms of dissolution, she overcame all scruples, and joyfully assisted in the work. Gratified at being enabled to soothe and console the still loved Alfred, she was unceasing and untiring. Day after day saw her devoted to the undertaking: and though it was apparent that soon there would be no need of her exertions, still it was indeed a comfort and a blessing to her to smoothen the painful and rugged path

that led towards the valley of the shadow of death.

Alfred had himself communicated to Leonora the tale of his love, and the name of the being to whom he had been so devotedly attached. With her imperturbable calmness and indifference she had listened to the recital, and had appeared during the whole of it to be perfectly indifferent to it, and quite unaffected by the subject.

Day after day passed, leaving the Marquis weaker and weaker. His spirit seemed to cling to its fleeting tabernacle as if by a miracle, for appetite and sleep had totally forsaken him. A summons for his mother brought her and Lady Arlingham, notwithstanding the severity and inclemency of the season. They travelled night and day, without ceasing, until they arrived at Kneuchtnanoon, where they found their worst fears verified. Lady Arlingham was in the most profound affliction, while the dowager Marchioness appeared more reconciled to the inevitable fate of her son than hitherto.

But nothing could comfort Lady Arlingham : with agony uncontrolled did she behold the awful ravages which disease and fast approaching death were making in the once noble and gifted youth in whom her life was placed. She wept, she groaned in the bitterness of her sorrow, and refused to be comforted. In vain were the entreaties, nay, commands, of her friend to be calm and to be collected ; she heeded them not, and still poured forth deeper and deeper exclamations of affection and anguish.

Alice had never seen the Marchioness from the day of her becoming the wife of Sir Leopold until the day of her arrival at Kneuchtnanoon, to receive the last breath of her son. Both were embarrassed, but most particularly Lady Cornwall ; she, however, met Alice with the greatest seeming affection, and professed to feel towards her the most unbounded interest. Alice heard all her words with the indifference which they merited from her, and appeared to be, as she in reality was, unmindful of them.

“ Mother,” said the Marquis to the Mar-

chioness, as one day she sat by his bedside, tracing in his wan countenance the near approaches of death,—“Mother, it is strange to me why you formed so great an antipathy to my union with Alice Beauclerk, when now you seem so fond of her, and so deeply attached to her. Strange surmises will arise in my mind, even now, concerning the cause. I shall not long be with you, and, ere we part, do, dearest mother, tell me why you so wilfully destroyed our mutual happiness.”

“Alfred, my child, the tale is a long one, and contains too much of misery for me to dwell upon it even now. Surely, my child, you should know me too well to doubt the sincerity of my words, when I tell you that Alice never could have been your wife.”

“Some near connexion, dear and much-loved mother, must have formed the barrier which could not be overcome. Say, was it not so?”

“No, no, Alfred; you could never guess the right. It were folly for you to try to solve a mystery which must be one for ever.”

“Then, mother, a weight, an awful weight is taken off my conscience. Thanks, my dear parent, for the happiness which now you have imparted to me! I had dreaded some fearful consanguinity was between Alice and myself; and I felt assured that our blasted happiness was the wages of a love unhallowed. I even feared to ask you was it thus.”

“You need not be alarmed, Alfred; all is now as it should be; and when returning health shall reanimate you again to strength and beauty, then you again shall taste of peace and perfect happiness.”

“For shame, mother, for shame! You would not, surely, do me such foul and deadly wrong as to encourage hopes which never can or will be realized. My health, my strength, my life, are gone; and the time allotted me here is too short to permit me to waste it in vain hopes or fruitless wishes. Ah, mother! we must all render up a long account hereafter: may you be able to do so in the full assurance

of hope and pardon, such as even now I feel to have been granted to me, unworthy as I was to receive such blessings! One charge I leave upon you: you have wronged Alice, and, pardon me, my mother, when I add you have wronged me too; render to her, for my sake, when I am gone, a mother's love and a mother's care: she will need both in this vale of tears."

"But why, Alfred, all those thoughts of Alice, and Alice only? Is there no remembrance to be sustained of Leonora? Do you not feel for her too?"

"Feel, mother? Why, she feels too much for herself to need the warm feelings of another. But, indeed, I trust, and right deeply too, that she will preserve your love and kindness, and that she will in time forgive the injury we both have done her, in wedding her to one so careless of the virtues which she may have possessed. She will soon cease to think of me, who have been to her but a source of trouble and annoyance. Methinks that our dear and most kind

friend, Lady Arlingham, will feel as much for me as any others of those around me. Her love and her affection for me have equalled, if not surpassed, that of the most attached mother. What a blessing have you, my mother, in that more than friend or sister !”

CHAPTER XL.

A COLD and bitter wind, accompanied by gusts of sleet and rain, blew directly on the house of Kneuchtnanoon, unsheltered as it was, and exposed to the tempestuous breezes of an early spring evening. The weather had been, for some days, more mild and genial, and the change had been felt with pleasure by the invalid: but it seemed as if the alteration was but the precursor of a more violent storm than usual; for, on the present evening, the hail pattered with violence against the windows, while the howling hurricane which resounded around seemed to threaten annihilation to the tottering mansion.

The Marquis had been asleep, and his

mother, Lady Arlingham, and Alice, had been seated near to him. A deep and profound silence was maintained, while the chilling and winterish evening added to the dreariness of all the group, who sat watching with intense anxiety the breathings of their patient, which denoted the uneasiness of his slumbers.

The Marchioness, unable longer to remain in the apartment, and overcome by commingled feelings and fatigue, crept noiselessly from the room, in order to snatch a few moments of rest and repose ; while her companions remained as before, silent and watchful.

Hours elapsed, and still the restless sleep of Alfred continued. The light which had illumined the chamber had burnt out unnoticed by the Countess or Alice, and only the red and lurid glare of the fire remained to preserve them from total darkness. It was a sad and a cheerless watch, sustained by those two friends over a beloved and idolized object, soon to be taken from them, and resigned to his parent dust.

At last a slight stir roused both Lady Arling-

ham and Alice from their painful meditations. The Marquis was awake, and, in a voice stronger than of late it had been, asked for a light. Alice, more active than her companion, rose to procure one, and having done so, she almost instantly returned.

But when the glare of the taper which she bore flashed into the apartment, Lady Arlingham perceived that the long slumber of the evening was but the herald of death, which, long expected, had come to claim its victim. As Alice reseated herself, she too became convinced that all would soon be over, and in an agony of affliction looked towards the Countess, whose countenance clearly indicated her knowledge of the coming event.

“Will you not bring me a light, dearest mother?” said Alfred, as in vain his sightless orbs looked for what they never were again to behold.

“There is a light, my love—do you not see it?” sobbed Lady Arlingham, as she strove to conquer her emotion.

“ No, my kind friend, I do not see it; put it close to me,” murmured he.

The light was put upon the coverlid by the trembling hand of Alice.

“ Do you perceive it, Alfred ?” said she.

The dying man turned his head upon his pillow, and replied :—

“ No, Alice, I do not see it, nor never shall again ; but I hear your voice, my beloved, and I am content. Where are you, Alice ?”

“ Here, Alfred, here,” said Alice, as she took his hand and sunk upon her knees beside his couch, and wept torrents of tears at this the last misfortune which fate had treasured for her.

He was a long time silent. He lay motionless, with the hand of Alice grasped in his, while Lady Arlingham sat supporting his drooping head with her arm. He seemed as if a stupor was upon him, and both his watchful nurses thought that speech, like sight, had left him. But he again spoke :—

“ Alice, where is my mother ?”

“ She has left you for a time, Alfred, to lie

down and gain a little strength from sleep and rest. Shall I call her?"

"O no! do not call her here now. I should be sorry that she would witness that which is coming. I feel the rapid approaches of the long-threatened hour. She must not witness it. Lady Arlingham, give me your hand, and, Alice, take it: two such friends should indeed remain now and for ever united."

He pressed the hands which he grasped together, and again appeared to doze. His rich and luxuriant hair, damp and matted with the dews of death, was parted off his finely moulded forehead, and the outline of his chiselled features showed how perfect had been the work of nature; while the shrunken skin and care-worn expression of his countenance denoted the wreck which woe and mental sorrow had made upon it ere its prime.

Overcome with their feelings, the Countess and Alice scarcely breathed. The hour was midnight when Alfred strove once more to raise himself. The effort was unavailing. He

grasped more tightly the hands which he had continued to hold, notwithstanding his extreme debility; a faint sigh escaped his lips; one word he uttered—it was his last—“Alice!” He sunk back; the death-struggle passed across his brow; the expression of the countenance was that of intense anguish;—it vanished; the mild and gentle look which he always wore was in its place, and he was gone to “that bourne from whence no traveller returns.”

Long and weary were the hours that intervened between the death of the Marquis and the entrance of the Marchioness. Sleep had surprised her, and day had dawned ere she had awoke. As she entered the room where Lady Arlingham still was, the terrible reality burst upon her, and a scream of agony brought the Countess to herself. There she was, supporting the head, now lifeless, of the child of her affections. Her hand was in the inanimate grasp which had united it to that of Alice, and she sat, unmindful of the time that had elapsed, till the

entrance of the bereaved mother had recalled her to recollection.

She rose, and tottered from the bed to a sofa, upon which she sank, heedless of the exertions of the now assembled servants, to recal to life the fainting Alice. She had been discovered kneeling, but insensible, in the same spot, and in the same position which she had been in while life remained in the Marquis. Her head was upon the counterpane, and from its ghastly and bloodless appearance, it was feared that she too was dead. But the unceasing exertions of Mr. O'Grady soon brought her to life, and a recollection of the awful occurrences of the past eventful night. She was carried to her room; and Lady Arlingham was conveyed, in a state of insensibility, to her's, leaving to the wretched Marchioness the task of breaking the event to the younger Lady Cornwall.

She had passed a comfortable night, thinking but little, if any thing, of her husband. She did not awake until her usual hour, nor did the in-

telligence of the increased illness of the Marquis seem to make any peculiar impression upon her.

Certainly, however, when she saw the Marchioness, and heard the announcement from her lips, she did seem, for a few moments, to feel, and shed a few tears, but they were soon dried, and ere the close of the day her maid had been closeted with her in deep divan, concerning the ordering and arranging of her mourning, and consulting about the sort of cap which would most become her style of countenance.

She was particular in issuing her directions for the funeral, and the various *et cetera* attendant on such a solemnity. She wished to have the body conveyed to England, and deposited in the family vault. On every subject, concerning the business, she conversed with her usual exactness; and though she refused to visit the remains ere their removal, she was most particular as to the arrangements.

Each person in the house felt shocked and disgusted with the heartless woman, and the

Marchioness, despite her pride in possessing such a daughter, loathed for ever after the very sight of her.

Mr. O'Grady, and his excellent partner, felt acutely for the wretched Alice. A terrible cold, which she had taken on the awful night, attacked her chest, and promised to be both troublesome and alarming in the extreme. Night and day she persisted in remaining in the solemn chamber of death with Lady Arlingham, who, like her, was suffering as well from bodily as from mental agitation.

A sort of triumph pervaded the countenance and manner of the Dowager Countess, that was perfectly unaccountable to her friends. It seemed as if the death of her son had been a release from some expected and threatening danger, though decidedly her grief for him was deep, and his loss most bitterly and most severely felt by her.

Frederick Mansfield evinced in each action the sorrow which he experienced for his noble young friend and patron, and would have gladly spent his time in attending on him both before

and after death, but that he perceived he would have only disturbed and annoyed those whose hearts and souls were in the melancholy task; he, however, took upon himself to accompany the body to England, and, by so doing, discharge the only duty which devolved on him to perform.

Sad as was the time from the death of Alfred to the removal of his body from Kneuchtna-noon, still it was a dreadful trial for Alice as well as to Lady Arlingham to think upon the final though necessary separation. While his remains were with them they felt as if they had not completely lost him, but when the time must come they felt that their deep and fervent sorrow would be awakened and increased. As for the young widow she seemed all anxiety until the arrival of the day which would rid her of all encumbrance, and allow her to return to all the selfish comforts and adulations of her father's house and household.

CHAPTER XLI.

“ALICE,” said Lady Arlingham, one morning as they sat together, a few days previous to the departure of the Countess and the Dowager Marchioness from Kneuchtnanoon,—“Alice, I have much to say to you of deep import to us both. It matters now but little whether it be in private that the communication is made to you or not, but for the sake of our lost Alfred I should wish you to treasure it as an awful and momentous secret in your heart’s most inmost and sacred recesses.”

Alice looked up, and while her swelling bosom

heaved at the mention of that name so idolized even in death, she murmured her promise to her friend, that the secret, whatever it might be, would be inviolably preserved by her.

Lady Arlingham listened to her, as her soft voice gave to her the pledge which she had required, with intense interest and attention; when she had ended, the Countess answered—

“ Ah, my dearest young friend! you little know what I am about to disclose to you; it is a direful and an appalling history, and methinks your gentle and pure mind will recoil from me for ever, when you have heard my recital, for much of self I must detail; and that too not calculated to raise me in your estimation.”

“ My beloved Lady Arlingham, no change can take place in the affection which I bear for you. No details of the past can alter the feelings of the present; and I should, indeed, be found ungrateful to your love if aught which you can relate could cause me to withdraw the esteem with which I ought always to behold you. Open your heart unreservedly to me;

narrate those trials and those afflictions which you have at times hinted to me; and, if I am worthy to bestow advice, try that which I shall give you; but rely, unceasingly, on my devoted love."

"For myself, Alice, I have lost the shame which once taught me to cherish and keep guarded from the slightest breath of suspicion my tragic tale. And why? because the stimulus is gone; the being for whom the sin was committed is no more; and I should not shun the scorn and contumely which must attend a public disclosure of the facts, but that another is concerned in the eventful matter; another shares the iniquity which I committed, and she alone must now be cared for. Yes, Alice, Lady Cornwall needs your mercy; and, at your hands, requires a continuation of the secret."

"If so, I would rather that I never heard the communication, dear Lady Arlingham. Where the peace, and perhaps honour, of the Marchioness is concerned, I must think it right to decline the confidence which you wish to place

in me, and most particularly as the matter cannot interest me, unconnected as I am in the business."

"You are connected in the business, my Alice; and it is for your sake, principally, that I wish to relate it to you, as well as for the unburthening of a conscience too long troubled and weighed down with its offences."

"If so I court the narrative, whatever it may be, and again repeat my solemn promise to adhere to your wishes and injunctions on the subject."

"Then, Alice, I shall commence. But, first, it is needful for me to warn you, that Lady Cornwall is watchful, and should she suspect the tenor of my discourse, she could be revengeful too, to me and you. She could not brook the disclosure, and either she or we should pay the penalty of it. You may not, perhaps, be aware that I was left young an orphan, and dependant on the bounty of friends and careless relatives. My father was an officer, high in military rank, in a foreign service, and had married, while

abroad, a beautiful Italian, to whom he was devotedly attached. She died in giving birth to me; and her sorrowing husband did not long survive her loss, but fell a victim to a broken heart, leaving me a helpless babe totally unprovided for. The father of Lady Cornwall and your protectress, the second son of the Duke of Erban, took pity on me, and brought me, for the sake of my father, to be an inhabitant of his dwelling, and the spoiled plaything of his family. His daughters, both grown up and marriageable, were extremely fond of me, and I returned their affection with all the warmth and sincerity of childhood. But of Alice, the younger sister, I thought unceasingly, her soft and angelic manners and disposition found their way to my heart, and I almost adored her.

“The sisters were opposites in all things; Maude, proud and overbearing, awed all that came before her, while Alice made all that beheld her love her. She was mild, and she possessed many attractions of person as well as mind, but her sister was more beautiful than any

being that I ever beheld ; she was pre-eminently lovely. We were all proud of her, but we were all fond of Alice.

“ General, then Captain Beauclerk, the younger son of a noble house, saw, and deeply felt the attractions of Alice ; for years they were attached ; and when increasing rank and wealth enabled him to claim her hand, he received it with fervent thankfulness as the best and richest gift that Heaven could bestow upon him. He and his bride soon left us to join his regiment, and I was left to the care of Maude. Of a jealous disposition, she had felt acutely, and with much of wrath, the precedence which the younger and less lovely Alice had taken of her in marriage ; but when she had been gone away for some little time, she began to rejoice, for she found herself then the centre of attraction in her father’s house. As for me I was a gay, glad child, unmindful of the dread future which lay before me.

“ I was allowed to run wild ; a pet with all, I had an unrestrained licence to do as I pleased ;

and as I was naturally quick and sharp at all things, I soon picked up a smattering of accomplishments from my nominal teacher and guardian Maude; who had, however, always too much to do, and too much to think of, to waste either her time or her thoughts on me. Numerous suitors appeared at the feet of Maude, all professing adoration, but none offering marriage. She was beginning to feel unquiet sensations, and to dread a doom of single blessedness, when a new and unexpected candidate appeared before her, and with more appearance of decided intentions of soliciting her hand than any who had gone before him.

“ She soon became attached to him, and he offered himself to her acceptance. She accepted him; and all things progressed towards the completion of a marriage, which every one looked upon as being an excellent one, and certainly Sir Edward Lawrence was in all things to be admired, nay loved. Maude felt towards him an affection which she had never before experienced for any person, and she had but one

barrier to complete felicity. Her father's family was one of the oldest in the kingdom, and an overweening pride of birth had always been remarkable in her. Sir Edward was the son of a parvenu; and the aristocratic pride of the grand-daughter of a Duke could scarcely bow before the unhappy fact, nor consider his unbounded wealth an indemnification for his want of blood.

“ Her father had, as he imagined, reconciled her to this one want, and had, with extreme delight, noted her increasing love for Sir Edward, when his wilful and perverse child chose to dissolve the engagement, and nearly break a devotedly-attached heart by accepting the addresses of the young Lord Cornwall, a nobleman of great talent and distinction, who had become enamoured of her beauty in a casual meeting. His birth, his talents, his family, and his own fascinating manners, soon made her forget her fleeting passion for the ill treated Sir Edward, and cause a transfer of her affections to the beautiful and captivating Marquis. In vain

did her incensed father call to her remembrance her solemn engagement with her former lover; in vain did he dwell upon the barbarity of her conduct, and her want of honour; all his efforts were vain and ineffectual, and she persisted in discarding her lately affianced husband.

“ All was rapture and delight now with the intoxicated Maude, she seemed to tread on air, and she soon forgot Sir Edward and her short lived attachment for him. In pique he soon after married some wealthy person, and, in the end, was far happier than if he had been connected with his first proud and unfeeling love.

“ The marriage was solemnized with all the usual and requisite splendour; and though Lord William, her father, might at first have felt displeasure towards his child for her treatment of Sir Edward, he was consoled by the magnificence of the alliance which she had thus unexpectedly formed with one of the most ennobled and powerful families in Great Britain.

“ Mrs. Beauclerk had come up to London on the announcement of the intended marriage, and

was received with the most unbounded affection by her father, whose favourite she had been always. Her husband could not accompany her, and therefore her stay was of necessity short. After the celebration of the nuptials she proposed to Lord William that I should accompany her home, and take up my residence completely with her, as the dwelling of a single, old, and infirm man was not a place suited for a young girl such as I was. Delighted to get rid of so troublesome a charge, he gladly consented to the plan, and I, with unchecked delight, prepared to journey with my best friend, to her quiet and happy home. She was much changed in appearance during the three years which had passed between her marriage and that of her sister. She had had a premature accouchement, and the death of her beautiful infant had sadly altered her. But, during a long life, I never could recal the recollection of such perfect love as subsisted between General Beauclerk and his angelic wife. He was compelled by his arduous duties to be much from her; and I am convinced

that the only source of unhappiness which he ever experienced (in his married life), was derived from that cause.

“As for me, I soon experienced the benefit of the change which had been made in my manner of life. Well calculated to instruct and bring up youth, Alice spared neither time nor trouble to retrieve and make amends for my past idleness. A regular series and course of instruction ensued. She was unremitting in her attention to me, and I strove to repay her kindness by exerting myself to please her, and improve according to her wishes.

“During my residence with Alice she had been twice a mother, but her infants, weak and delicate from their birth, lived each but a few months. My society (for I was, when I became her visitor and pupil, about nine years old) was a great comfort and consolation to her, and she became each day more affectionate to me. General Beauclerk, an amiable and benevolent man, became as much attached to me as if I had been his own daughter, and felt contented

that during his unavoidable absences his wife should have some one to amuse and engage her. He with her lent his aid towards furthering my progress in education, and granted himself, with pleasure, leave for Mrs. Beauclerk to incur whatever expense she deemed necessary for my benefit.

“ We seldom heard of Maude ; wrapt up in the pride of her high station she could but seldom spare time to write to her sister, whose love for her was as fervent and as strong as ever. Lord Cornwall we heard had entered into excessive dissipations, and was seldom with his wife, who lived likewise in a whirlpool of pleasure. They had had four daughters during the first years of their union, two of which had died in their infancy. The others were, we heard, lovely children, but unable to comfort their parents for their want of an heir, the only blessing withheld from their wishes. Both felt acutely this loss, for the strict entailment of the family estates rendered large settlements for the Marchioness or her daughters impossible ; and, likewise on

her marriage, she had had a violent dispute and quarrel with her husband's only brother, for whom she nurtured a most peculiar aversion. She, therefore, could not bear to think of the goods of this life, which must accrue to him and his hated children, through her want of a son. The probability of such an event taking place became each year more uncertain, as after the birth of her fourth girl, all expectation of her having another child faded away, and she at last gave herself up to unbounded despair.

“About this time General Beauclerk was ordered abroad, and Alice was delighted by receiving an invitation to take up her residence with her sister while he should be away. As I was included in the invitation, Alice gladly accepted it; and, as soon as General Beauclerk sailed, we set off for London, where we were most kindly received and welcomed.

“Alice, however, soon left us to visit some old friends, and during her absence, which was but short, the tale of my misfortunes commences. Eleven years had intervened from the time of

my leaving London until my return, and all who saw me flattered me, by complimenting me upon my increased beauty. Maude, pleased and delighted with me, lavished on me unbounded love and tenderness; and the most complete delirium of happiness and vanity took possession of my head and understanding.

“I will not say that I was not handsome; for, without vanity, my Alice, I was often told that I was gifted with the dangerous blessing of beauty. Just twenty was I when I was launched into the gay, deceitful world of fashion; young and fair, and, at that time, innocent and artless. I was hurried from one scene of dissipation to another, until I became giddy from the excess of pleasure. I knew not the hidden paths of danger which were before me, and unarmed by the admonishing voice of my absent friend, I ran a course of rapturous delight, which ended in my ruin.

“And now, Alice, all that is good of me is told. All that can please or amuse you is nar-

rated. Now comes the damning tale of crime and sin—can you hearken to it?”

“I can and will, dearest Lady Arlingham,” answered Alice, as she took the trembling hand of her agitated friend, and pressed it closely to her sympathizing and affectionate heart.

“Then, dearest girl, I shall continue; but, give me a glass of water, for my tongue is parched by the recital of the events which I have detailed to you. Alice, now I come to try your affection for the dead, and your friendship for the living.” Lady Arlingham then continued.

CHAPTER XLII.

“ LORD CORNWALL was a different being from what we had been led to suppose. He was highly gifted, and he was fascinating beyond the common acceptation of the word. His society was universally courted, and had he pleased it, he need never have been at home. But he was a most affectionate father; and he idolized his beautiful children, one nine, the other eight years old. The youngest, Madeleine, was exceedingly like to her aunt Alice, and possessed her sweet and mild temper and disposition. Lord Cornwall was (when he pleased to be so) exceedingly hot and fiery, and for this reason he and the Marchioness did not live happily together. She was eternally talking at him, and

annoying him in every possible manner she could; and though he generally bore with her patiently, sometimes he would give vent to his passions, and then it was indeed dreadful to listen to them, or to behold them. He knew his own failings, and therefore kept out of her way as much as he possibly could; and as she was scarcely ever at home, he amused himself, when not engaged otherwise, in reading, and playing with the little girls.

“ I was never very strong, and the eternal round of dissipation which I was in, along with the late hours, soon obliged me to take an occasional day of rest and retirement from pleasure. Those days were usually spent in the library, where, with the Marquis and his children, I soon forgot to wish for a return to amusements, of which I had begun to tire. Then it was that the maxims of prudence and virtue were forgotten—then it was that I fell from my innocence.

“ Ah, Alice ! it is a hard task to tell of our misdeeds and iniquities to one so pure as you

are. It is an agonizing thought to recal the past, where so much of sin is blended. Oh, my child ! you will loathe me, as I do myself ; but you will pity me, for years of remorse and contrition have not effaced the bitterness of my criminal and headstrong passion.

“ I began to feel an inconceivable measure of delight in the long absences of Maude, which gave me leisure and opportunity to listen to the honied words of her husband. He talked, he read, he sang to me ; and each moment I became more fascinated and more captivated by him. Unaware of the risk which we both were running, we revelled in the delight of each other’s society, and became jealous of the company of all but of ourselves. Unhappily for me, Lady Cornwall never once dreamt of an attachment existing between us. She was too much engaged and occupied to remember that such things have been, and she allowed us full scope for our inclinations.

“ Now, when age and reason have assumed their proper sway, I think and ponder on the

folly of my conduct, in thus running headlong to destruction ; but then, when all the fiery passions of youth were warm and kindled in my breast, when I neglected the counsels which I had received, and when the temptations which surrounded me were strong, and present to me, I had not power nor had I inclination to resist their force.

“ By degrees Lord Cornwall began to repose in me his miseries and his unhappiness, and to bewail the want of sympathy and affection which once he had hoped for in a wife. Then it was that I participated in his feelings, and his ruined hopes ; and compassion and affection for him began to work their way in my foolish heart. Then it was, that in the confidence of each other we began to love, and then it was that we forgot reason, virtue, and the path of peace, and then it was we fell.

“ Years upon years have passed since the hour that first linked my soul to vice, and still it seems to me but as yesterday.. The guilty throb of conscious sin, the tremulous beating of

the foul and desperately wicked heart, as my mind dwelt upon the dread command, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery;’ the shrinking from the gaze of all, as if the damning sin were marked and branded on my forehead, for all to know and loathe me,—all, all are still my recompense,—all, all are still before me, and about me. Alice, my beloved, you are pained at this dread recountal; your heart is pained to hear of so much and so deep sin, but all is not yet told; the worst is still to come.

“How easily do we progress from vice to vice. The first committal of our crime was painful to be borne, but by degrees we became more collected, and less mindful of the consequences. We became guarded, and watchful, and succeeded beyond our own anticipations in blinding Maude, who each moment made herself more disagreeable to the Marquis. The return of Mrs. Beauclerk obliged us to be more circumspect than ever; and I never felt the full force of my iniquity until I received her warm and unsuspecting caress of affection. Then it was

that I first felt how utterly degraded I was, and how utterly unworthy of her love. Lord Cornwall was too fond, and too much attached to me, to enable me to hope that his feelings would be mastered and suppressed, and I lived in a constant fear of the terrific discovery being made.

“Maude had for some weeks declined going into company, and after some weeks of serious illness, was declared by her physicians to be in a fair way of once again becoming a mother. The surprise was great to all, and the intelligence received with rapture. Eight years had elapsed since the birth of Madeleine, and from that period, all hope had been given up. The Marquis was more gratified by the information than any one else. He had begun to feel the deepest contrition for his conduct with respect to me, and our meetings had of late been changed from joy and gladness to sadness and remorse. I too would soon give birth to a living evidence of my frailty; and for me, and of me, he could but think and sorrow.

“An appointment, which the Marquis soon

after received, served in some manner to take off his thoughts from our criminality. He was made an ambassador to V——, and was obliged to leave his family to follow after. On his departure I experienced all the misery of my condition, and gave myself up to weeping and constant acute suffering. My miserable appearance drew the eyes of Maude upon me, and she soon after began to watch me with intense attention. At last, the truth flashed upon her of my being in the same situation in which she was, and at the same time suspicions of the real state of the matter arose to her mind. She was for long silent, but it was that the force of her vengeance might be the more heavily felt by me, the wretched sinner.

“ At last, she summoned resolution and determination to her support, and she addressed me in tones which well bespoke the anger which she was trying in vain to suppress.

“ ‘ And so, wretched and depraved being, you have dared to bring sin and infamy under my roof, even into my presence. Dare you deny

the fact of bearing in your bosom a pledge of crime and guilt?’

“ I could not answer her. My heart swelled, and I burst into tears at her feet; she spurned me from her with a look of deepest abhorrence, and exclaimed :—

“ ‘ Kneel not to me, vile hypocrite ! waste not your words on me. I know what your crime has been, and well do I now know the author of it. He is now far removed from my vengeance, but you, the partner of his guilt, can bear the burthen of my wrath. Oh, viper ! how I loathe you !’

“ It was useless for me to try to soothe or calm her in the fiery mood which then possessed her, and rightly too, against me. With other words and invectives still more harsh, she left me ; and never did I experience such agony as in the thought of the change which Alice Beauclerk would feel towards me, now that I was found unworthy of her love or care. But Maude, for her own reasons, suppressed her outraged and vindictive feelings, and kept from

Alice the knowledge of the business at that time. When next we met, the Marchioness was cold and haughty, but less violent than before. She took an opportunity of addressing me one day, when chance had thrown us together, and alone.

“ ‘Adelaide, one way remains for you to save yourself from ruin and disgrace.’

“ ‘Name it, dearest Maude,’ said I, in a frenzy of delight.

“ ‘Not now, Adelaide,’ replied she, drawing herself away from my touch with a look of horror; ‘not now, Adelaide, but at some other time I will inform you. It is a safe and an easy remedy, and the only one now left you; if you agree to it, I will promise to screen you from the scorn of the world, and the scandal which your conduct merits.’

“ ‘I promise,’ said I; ‘any thing you advise I will do, were it to die for you.’

“ ‘If so, then,’ replied she, ‘keep the matter to yourself, closely locked in your bosom. Do not inform Alice Beauclerk of your situation;

her conscience might lead her to reject the means I offer for your salvation. Appear as usual, and at a future day you shall know all.' So saying, she left me, transported with delight and gratitude at the unexpected change in her behaviour towards me. I looked forward to returning peace, and a reputation preserved through the means of the being whom I had most injured. For the first time since my dereliction from virtue, I experienced the rapturous hope of pardon, and a concealment of my unhappy condition. And we determined to follow the Marquis to V— as soon as the proper arrangements could be made for our departure from England.

CHAPTER XLIII.

“Now, Alice, comes the detail which cannot fail of creating in you new feelings towards me. But I must conclude as I have begun, by strictly revealing the facts as they occurred, without seeking to extenuate the errors which unhappily I have, during my eventful life, been led to commit against you—even you, my child, and that Almighty Being whose laws I dared to trample upon, whose commands I scorned, whose retribution is now, even now, heavily upon my soul.

“Lady Cornwall, sure of my perfect compliance with her wishes, whatever they might be, at last revealed to me her intentions; and, sinner as I was, the communication ‘entered

like iron into my soul.' It was an appalling alternative which she gave me, and my blood, even at this lapse of time, runs cold as I narrate it.

“She was, as I have already said, near her confinement, an event which, unexpected as it was, was one of incalculable joy to her and to the Marquis. He had all along—from the first announcement of her situation—expected the birth of a son, and a doubt of the possible disappointment of his hopes had never once occurred to mar his anticipations. Not so with the Marchioness; she had too often experienced the bitterness of blighted hope to reckon on the certitude of a boy being born to her, and a scheme, sinful and unnatural, had arisen to her imagination, and had each day and hour become more feasible, and less difficult to her masculine mind. She projected to me that we should remain at V—— until the period arrived at which our accouchements were expected. Lord Cornwall should be summoned from thence (the scene of his embassy) on some pretext, which

would grant to her time and opportunity to put her plans into execution, and allow her to do what she was well assured his noble and honourable principles would never permit him to concede to.

“ If a son should be granted to her prayers, my sin and my crime would be published to the world, and I was to be cast away from all that loved me—an outcast, a branded wretch of infamy, a polluted and abandoned being. If a daughter was sent to blast her with its unwished-for presence, then, and only then, a chance for me was granted. If a boy fell to my lot, great was to be my reward, and unbounded was to be my pardon. My stigmatized and disgraceful offspring, the wages of my iniquity, the everlasting memento of my frailty, was to usurp the place of the luckless daughter of Cornwall’s illustrious house, and concentrate upon itself the name, honours, and estates of its father, to the utter and complete extinction of the rights and privileges of the little forsaken girl. The secret was to be one of life and

death, and none were to be made acquainted with it, save the physician, the nurse, and Alice Beauclerk. To her the business should of necessity be confided, in order to procure a safe method of disposing of the female infant, who was thus—ere her birth—doomed to misery and misfortune.

“ I see, my Alice, your crimson cheek, and I mark your quivering lip ; already does a new light break upon you ; already do you begin to penetrate the mystery. But be calmed, my child ; for a few short moments quiet your emotion, and listen ere you curse me.

“ The temptation was a trying one. Fame, honour, salvation from impending ruin and disgrace, lay before me, with the preservation of my luckless and unborn babe from the scorn and neglect which otherwise must attend it during its sojourn on earth. On the other side was disgrace, neglect, opprobrium, and the total annihilation of my future hopes. The trial and contest between right and wrong was dreadful ; the struggle between duty and inclination was

indeed severe. I knew not what to do. I could not appeal to Alice for her aid or her advice, because an oath, as horrible as it was binding, had already been procured from me for secrecy by the arch temptress. Days, weeks passed before the struggle in my heart was overcome; and at last, aided by the devil and her own insidious allurements, Maude triumphed over my small remains of conscience and virtue. She achieved her purpose, and from that fell hour planted 'the worm that never dieth in my soul.'

"Alice Beauclerk fell into a bad and declining state of health soon after the ratification of our barbarous treaty, which must account for the ignorance of that sweet woman with respect to my condition. On the plea of attending her, I remained constantly in her room, to avoid suspicion, and association with Lord Cornwall, who was unaware of the Marchioness having discovered our mutually criminal attachment. We seldom met, and when we did, it was with a bitter and a painful feeling that prevented all

renewal of our former intercourse, although I with shame acknowledge my still deep and fervent love for my destroyer, who, with man's natural inconstancy, had soon ceased to think of me as he once had done.

“General Beauclerk was prevented from returning home to Alice; and I am well assured that that was the cause of her depression and disease. The affection which she bore her husband was each year becoming stronger, and the danger of the service in which he was engaged never left her free from depressing and harrowing anticipations and fears.

“We lived very secluded at V——, and the Marquis alone shared in the amusements which there abounded. Report spoke of his forming an attachment to a lovely German girl, and the news was not long hidden from his wife, who was, however, too much taken up with preparations for her momentous enterprise to bestow a thought on him or on his infidelity.

“The time of the Marchioness's lying-in was drawing nearer and nearer, and I looked for-

ward to mine as taking place some weeks after. Doctor Cameron, a London physician of considerable repute in his profession, was engaged to come over to attend on Maude, and to him had been confided her secret. He was for a length of time unwilling to engage in so hazardous an undertaking, and she had almost given up the task of trying to induce him. But what will not money effect? Maude at last conquered, and brought him to terms. The affair was settled between them, and he was employed to negotiate with the nurse, who also was to accompany him from London to V——. The sums which those two persons required for their nefarious assistance were immense, and Lord Cornwall, completely blinded by his wife, paid them afterwards, without a murmur, as debts of honour contracted by her.

“He was constantly from home, and as the world thought proper to account for his absence by his attachment to the German, I suppose that such was the cause of it. He never seemed to regard me as an object of affection from this

period, and therefore the Marchioness was content with any other fancy which he chose to form, so that I was obliterated from his imagination.

“My sufferings of mind were inconceivable, as I felt that I was thus about to aid so disgraceful and odious a deception ; and oftentimes was I tempted to escape from my horrible entanglement, and thus for ever free myself from the terrible obligation. But to do so was impossible ; I was closely watched, and Maude was well aware of my intentions, and eventually prevented them.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

“THE day came,—Maude was ill, and contrived to get the Marquis away from home with an ingenuity that, at any other time, would have amazed and amused me. The state of my nerves soon brought on me excruciating tortures, and I bid fair to being a mother long before my companion in iniquity.

“Then it was, that, in the height of her agony, Maude summoned Alice Beauclerk, who, in a state of considerable alarm for the situation of her loved sister, had left her sick room to attend on her. I was laid on a sofa in the same chamber, wishing that each moment was my last. Alice did not mind me, and ascribed my illness to my excited state of mind for the wel-

fare of my friend. Soon, however, she was undeceived, by the Marchioness ordering the nurse from the apartment, and approaching to where I lay trembling and agonized.

“ ‘ Alice,’ the ruthless woman cried, as she pointed to me in scorn and haughty triumph, ‘ Alice, behold your pupil ! behold the pure and saintly Adelaide, on whom you have lavished years of care and love ! Look at her, Adelaide ! look at the woman that reared and fostered you with a mother’s love, but to find how utterly depraved and unworthy of her care you are ! Look, Alice, look at that young and shameless adulteress !’

“ Alice Beauclerk, amazed and terrified, ascribed at first to delirium the words of Maude. But soon—too soon—did she prove their truth, in the awful anguish that each moment racked my suffering frame ; too soon did she prove the truth of that proud and well-avenged woman. She cast herself upon her knees at the feet of Maude ; she wept, she implored for mercy on the sinful wretch that lay before her, and at that

moment of her tenderness did Maude triumph over her hitherto unsullied honour.

“The eloquence of woman was poured forth by Alice as she witnessed my unaided and unassisted agony; she prayed for help, but, until her purpose was achieved, Maude was immovable. At last, Maude cried, in seeming mercy,—

“‘Alice, give me your oath to serve and to assist me in my present need; swear to conceal for ever what is about to be revealed to you, and then I will have mercy on yonder suffering mortal. For her sake, swear: and this scene shall never be exposed to the knowledge of the world. For her sake, and for her salvation, swear!’

“‘I swear!’ said my tortured friend, who scarcely knew what she was doing, so engrossed was she by the anguish and disgrace which I, her darling, had brought upon her; ‘I swear to do all that you wish or require me to do, so help me God! provided you forgive and pardon my

beloved Adelaide, and summon to her aid some experienced and gentle helper in her sorrow.'

"Maude smiled; and, turning from her sister, she exclaimed, with an averted countenance, 'Now, Alice, know that if a son is born to yonder wretch, it enters my arms as an heir, and to my husband must it be presented as his lawful child, the babe now born of his wife. No whisperings of remorse, Adelaide; no drawings-back now! On you does Adelaide Harburton depend for life and fame!'

"A thousand years could not efface from my remembrance the look of horror with which Alice regarded her sister as she heard her words; she turned from her with loathing, and she asked, in deepest bitterness of spirit,—

"'And, Adelaide, is it thus? Added to your foul crime, have you dared to form a compact so revolting to nature and humanity?'

"I could only murmur an affirmative, and she continued,—

“ ‘ And if your unhappy babe should be a helpless girl, what is to become of you ?’

“ ‘ I shall cast her on the world, disgraced, as she deserves to be, with her bantling in her arms, the proof of her foul guilt,’ said Maude, in a voice of hatred and disgust.

“ ‘ And if your child should be a girl, what do you mean to do with it, poor innocent ?’

“ ‘ Leave it for you to nurse, and rear, Alice, in the paths of virtue, as you did Adelaide,’ replied her sister. Alice could not heed her longer, for pity was struggling in her affectionate heart for me, and she exclaimed,—

“ ‘ Do as you will, Maude ; and may God forgive your sinful words and intentions ! As for me, I am bound by an oath to do your wicked bidding ; for the sake of Adelaide, I will not break it now. Open the door, and admit some instant help, or murder too will be on your guilty soul.’

“ The Marchioness opened the door—the physician and nurse entered the apartment ; the door was re-locked, and in the presence of

Maude, Alice, and Dr. Cameron, along with Mrs. Perkins, the nurse, I brought into this wicked and cruel world of sin a 'sinless child of sin!'—a fine and promising boy, some hours older than a sweet and lovely girl, which the Marchioness gave birth to. That boy, Alice, was Portland; that wronged and Forsaken girl was—you!"

As Lady Arlingham paused, Alice Lindorf threw herself upon her neck, and gave way to floods of tears. During the latter part of the narrative, she had expected the disclosure which now was made; but when she heard the unquestionable tale completed, and heard the wretched Countess announce her unsullied birth, her feelings became overcome, and for hours she sat sobbing, and unable to controul herself. The Countess read in those tears her pardon for her part in the transaction, and implored her to be calmed and comforted. She appealed to her to subdue her feelings ere the Marchioness should enter, and mark her increased agitation, which would immediately arouse her suspicions,

and cause a public disclosure of the facts which she had repeated.

When Alice had become comparatively calm, Lady Arlingham continued detailing to her the few facts as yet untold in her short but eventful history :—

“ The sex to which unhappily you belonged, Alice, was no sooner known than you were committed to the arms and care of Mrs. Beauclerk, who, completely overcome by the scene which had taken place, leaned, scarcely sensible, against the bed on which her sister lay. She was, however, awakened to recollection by the voice of the Marchioness, as it addressed her, saying :—

“ ‘ Take that luckless babe, Alice, from my sight for ever; let her never have a knowledge of her parents; and, mind, that on you now hangs my future destiny, as well as on your secrecy depends the yet uninjured fame of Adelaide.’ Your protectress, Alice, took you to her heart, and ever after were you the child

of her soul and her affections. You know the sequel of the tale. With you rests the power to judge if I have injured you intentionally."

Scarcely had the Countess ended, when the Marchioness entered; Alice hastened to withdraw, ere she could observe her visible agitation and emotion, and the young widow hurried away without daring to cast a glance at the proud and sinful mother, who had thus disowned and 'Forsaken' her.

"The Sutherlands are determined, Adelaide, to invalidate the will of my lost boy," said Lady Cornwall to Lady Arlingham, as she seated herself near her.

"Then, Maude, you cannot defend it," was the answer of her friend.

"And why should I not, Adelaide? The knowledge of which the present heir declares himself to be master, must be a *ruse* to deter me from making good my claim, as well as that of Leonora. If I now remain quiet, without

defending Alfred's power and right to do as he pleased with the unentailed property, I stamp his memory for ever as that of an impostor."

"And, Maude, remember the perjuries, the guilt, the shame of such proceedings as the matter will require, ere you substantiate your unreal claim. Think on the memory of our departed boy, and let not the ungenerous world have cause to scorn him for what is yet unknown. Believe me, Maude, the Sutherlands do not commence a hazardous undertaking. They must be well aware of the truth of their surmises by some unknown and unthought-of means, or they would not seek to disturb the ashes of the dead."

"They can know nothing, Adelaide. Cameron was too wary and too cunning to risk a disclosure so injurious to his own honour; the old nurse has not for years been heard of, and on the faith of Alice Beauclerk we could well depend. Say, now, how could the matter, so

long at rest, become developed at the termination of some two or three and twenty years?"

"Maude, Dr. Cameron died with many sins upon his soul. Ere he raised his hand to take the life which had been granted him for better purposes than those which he performed, he wrote a long account of the most particular passages in his ill-spent life. We know the documents which he left behind were sedulously concealed, and that not all our united artifices could procure a knowledge of their contents. How can we say what in his last hours his conscience tempted him to do. And likewise that old and hardened woman who assisted him, did she not vanish from among her friends and relatives mysteriously? Can we say that she has not now been bought as once before she was? Ah, Maude! mark me, it is better now for you to remain quiet in this business, and leave the Sutherlands what they most justly are entitled to."

"Never, Adelaide, never! I will fight to

the last, and defend my cause, just or unjust as it may be, from those Sutherlands, who so bitterly abominate me. They cannot prove the facts at this distant period, and if they get witnesses to affirm it, I can procure others who will outswear them. You, too, must aid me, Adelaide; the matter is now equally ours; with each other must we stand or fall."

"Maude, we have long been partners and associates in sin. Long have we lived together with the same feelings, the same objects, and the same affections. But now our dream is past. Our child, for whom was sacrificed so much, is gone from us for ever; taken in mercy ere his disgrace and our infamy was made public. For the sake of him, for the sake of heaven, eschew your vain and empty longings, and try to find quiet for that conscience so long seared, and so long tainted by the poison of your guilt. I will not, for the wealth of empires, again add perjury to my soul: I will not again dare to bring upon me the unavenged wrath of God. No, Maude, I will not again companion my

thoughts, bad as they may be, with yours. You may be frantic in your threats, you may upbraid, but I will not be longer your confederate in sin. My days are numbered; they are not many, and while life is spared me to repent, I will commence the mighty work."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE feelings of Alice may well be imagined as she pondered over the recital of Lady Arlingham, so fraught with interest to her. How thankful did she feel for her preservation from that union which once she looked upon as being the height of all human happiness and felicity. How ardently did she pour forth her gratitude to the Disposer of Events for her deliverance from that terrible and awful danger. And how did she rejoice that Heaven had, in mercy, summoned Alfred from his earthly pilgrimage ere the unpitying successors to his father's patrimony had wrested it from his possession, and given to the world the tale of guilt, which would have hurled him from his high station to the lowest depths of ignominy and disgrace.

A sentiment nearly arising to disgust, took possession of her mind towards her mother. Unnatural as was the feeling, she could not, with all her exertions, suppress it; and it was with no trifling feeling of delight that she witnessed her departure from Kneuchtnanoon.

For Lady Arlingham she felt far differently. Her kind and tender heart sympathized with the unhappy victim of seduction, and she felt a genuine pity for the errors now so bitterly atoned for by the loss of her son. The remembrance of that son was one cause, without doubt, for her leniency to the many failings of the unhappy mother. Sincere regret attended their separation, and a mutual interchange of promises of never-ending friendship and affection.

Kneuchtnanoon was indeed a dreary and a solitary residence for one whose only thoughts and recollections were of sadness and despondency. But, secure in the affectionate attachment of her old and tried friends, she could not bear to think of separating from them. For months after the departure of her mother and

the Countess she remained a prey to melancholy retrospection, and unable to accept the kind and proffered hospitality of the Lindorfs. She constantly heard from Lady Arlingham, and was pained, above conception, by the news which her letters contained.

Lady Cornwall the elder, persisting in her own vain and hurtful resolution of defeating the Sutherlands at law, respecting her avowed son's right to will his personal and unentailed property, had set up a defence, and persisted in making good his claims to the possessions of the Marquis his father. Against the prayers and entreaties of Lady Arlingham she persevered, and commenced preparations for the trial of the matter with the most sanguine hopes of success. She principally built her hopes upon the want of evidence on the part of the present Marquis, and unaware of the depth of his knowledge on the matter, laughed to scorn his hopes of success.

But Alice was soon made certain of the state

of the case, by the anxiously expected report of Lady Arlingham, who wrote—

“ My Alice, all is now over, the cause of so much import to you and to us is ended; and I must now, in the solitude of some unknown and retired residence, seek a concealment for that disgrace which ere now is publishing to the world. Ah, my dear and injured friend! your true and noble birth is openly avowed, and your claims, as the daughter of Lord Cornwall, are without the least dispute allowed. For you, the bright and virtuous child of suffering, a new era is about to open. A descent unsullied, a life and character of surpassing worth, and a form of unrivalled beauty, may well rank you with the best and noblest in the land. Alice, for you, the good and beautiful, all is fair and promising; the clouds that dimmed the sunshine of your young life have passed away; the prospects around you are bright and joyous; and all that will now tarry to mar your happiness is the

remembrance of the never-ending remorse that will prey on the cankered mind of your once loved Alfred's mother. For her I know your tender and commiserating heart will feel with pity and regret; for her, perchance, you will yet cherish a portion of that regard which once you felt towards her. Alice, if now you saw me, you would, from your inmost soul, forgive the cruel wrong I did you.

“The trial came on. Your mother, assisted by the first and ablest lawyers in the kingdom, opposed the right the Sutherlands had claimed of possessing themselves of those properties, willed by the unfortunate Alfred to her and to his wife. Eloquence and learning could not stand before the plain unvarnished tale of truth. Despite the innumerable perjuries which I blush to own were summoned to aid the unrighteous cause, the Marquis proved clearly, and to the satisfaction of the entire court, the deception and gross deceit which had been practised to despoil him of his rights and his inheritance.”

“Oh, Alice! how my blood runs cold as I

think upon the deep and public disgrace which attended on your mother and on me in that hour. My wretched and guilty passion for the Marquis was, by unthought of means, brought forward; the vile treaty between your mother and myself was declared. The birth of Alfred was clearly stated; and your unhappy entrance on the world was accurately and succinctly narrated. Witnesses to substantiate all this and more were called. The written declaration of the physician (Dr. Cameron) was read and examined; his sworn attestation of the matter, which had for years been deposited in the keeping of a noble and illustrious senator, was shown and proved to be his. The old and decrepit nurse, long imagined to be dead, was brought forward, and added her evidence in the most clear and concise manner to the already newly established facts. In fact, nothing was wanting to validate the claims so justly belonging to the injured Sutherlands; and nothing was wanting to prove the turpitude of our actions and our designs. If aught had power to solace or con-

sole me, in that dread hour of discovery and exposure, it was the kind feeling which existed in all grades of society, that Alfred had been removed ere he was thus disgraced.

“ I was a concealed spectator during that short but eventful trial. I escaped unknown and unsuspected, for my disguise was impenetrable. But Maude, the proud, and the queen-like Maude was there, arrayed in sables, as a widowed wife and a bereaved mother, in all the pomp and dignity of her elevated rank; and unconscious of the total overthrow of her character which was before her.

“ She sat calm and perfectly collected through the stating of the case and the defence; and not until the written attestation of the deceased physician had been read aloud did she appear to dread the ultimate triumph of her cunningly concerted scheme. The appearance of Mrs. Perkins, the assistant nurse, was, however, conclusive. I marked the tremor which oppressed her; I noted her convulsed breathings, and I saw the evident symptoms of the war of passions

within. But she sat determinedly even after her friends had implored her to quit the court. On the finding of the verdict, she rose, her proud lip curled in scorn and disdain; she cast a withering look of speechless hatred towards the triumphant Sutherland; and, accepting the arm of a noble friend, walked, with a majestic and firm step, from the gaze of the numbers, whose eyes, for the last hour, had been intently fixed upon her.

“ I saw her, Alice, on the evening of that same day; she was lying nearly senseless on a couch; she did not know me; reason had resigned her seat, and I fear, that ere long, the mother, whom you have so lately found, will be but a drivelling idiot or an outrageous maniac, so think her medical assistants. I have never left her, nor never shall. Years may roll on, and find her still as she is now, but never can I desert, in the hour of her need, my leagued companion and confederate through so long and so varied a life of sin as ours has been.

“ Write, Alice, write; your letters will con-

sole and comfort me in this my state of suffering and probation. The crowd of vain and heartless adulators, which once swarmed around us, have disappeared, and, save the occasional visit of one or two, who, in the days of our pride and our prosperity, we neglected, no one thinks it worth their while to waste their thoughts or time on us.

“Farewell, Alice, my blessing shall be on you. Think of me, my child; pardon me; and in your prayers, so pure and so truly those of a Christian-minded woman, remember to ask for peace to the sinful mind and corrupted heart of

“ADELAIDE ARLINGHAM.”

CHAPTER XLVI.

ALICE did not need a second letter from Lady Arlingham; she at once determined to set off and join with her in the painful task of attending on her unfortunate mother. She acquainted Mr. and Mrs. O'Grady with the facts which now she need not longer treasure up in secret, and received from them every encouragement to proceed immediately to London.

She was soon in readiness, and, with Mathews, (whom she had acquainted, likewise, with the discovery which she had made,) hastened on the unpleasing journey. She hurried to the house still occupied by the Marchioness, though now no longer hers, and, in a state of most violent excitement, asked for Lady Arlingham.

She was shown into the well-remembered boudoir, now in a state of the most melancholy loneliness, untenanted by its former brilliant and magnificent possessor, now sunk so low in misery and wretchedness. Every thing was in disorder; writings, books, works, and all the employments and former amusements of the Marchioness, were scattered about as if she had long left them unsought or uncared for. Alice became completely overpowered at thus finding herself in the dwelling of her parents, unlooked for and unrequired; the retrospection, too, of the occurrences which had taken place, so many and so varied, since last she had been in that room, added to her affliction; and when Lady Arlingham entered, she found her weeping bitterly.

The meeting was fraught with excessive pain to both, but especially to Alice. She was inexpressibly affected at the change which had taken place in her lately lovely and beautiful friend, and could not repress her tears as she looked upon her and remembered what her sufferings must have been since last they parted.

Lady Arlingham informed Alice that the Marchioness was rapidly sinking. All aid and medical assistance were totally unavailing, and it was hoped that a few weeks, if not days, might terminate her sufferings. She invited her to visit the chamber of the invalid, as there could not be the least chance of her in any way remembering her "forsaken" child.

Alice followed the Countess to the room of the Marchioness, and with noiseless footsteps entered it. It was dark, and it was long ere the despised daughter could catch a glimpse of the mother who had rejected her and had disowned her.

By degrees, as she became accustomed to the gloom of the apartment, she was enabled to behold her; but how changed and altered from the fascinating and magnificent Marchioness of Cornwall, once the wonder and admiration of the world, was the feeble and delirious sufferer who lay before her! The ghastly expression of the stern though still lovely features, and the deadly and pallid expression of countenance,

struck a damp and terror to the heart of her unloved child, whose feelings of pity and commiseration were instantly awakened towards the wretched and unhappy woman.

The Countess, who felt deeply for Alice, soon withdrew her from the melancholy and heart-rending scene, and insisted on her immediately retiring to rest. Alice was glad to follow her advice; for her rapid and hurried journey had tended, with her excessive agitation, to bring on a slight feverish attack.

By the care of Lady Arlingham, however, and perfect quiet, she soon regained her usual strength, and was in a few days able to join with her in attending on Lady Cornwall, who continued much in the same way as she had been from the first period of the attack. The society of Alice was most consolatory to the Countess, whose spirits had completely sunk under the late terrible visitations of Providence, and a comparative degree of content took possession of her hitherto distracted mind. Her feelings and conversations were indicative of

the pious and resigned tenor of her mind, and she expressed herself to Alice in terms of resignation most comforting and gratifying to that benevolent and Christian being.

The pomps and vanities of the world had for long been losing their charms for her ; and now that all was completely and irrevocably lost, she experienced for them neither sorrow nor regret. The work of repentance was indeed begun, and the pure hope and faith which illumined her sinful breast was fast inundating it with the heavenly joys which are shed upon that sinner that "repents and turns with truth from the errors of her ways."

CHAPTER XLVII.

ALICE was not long called upon to assist in the laborious charge of attending on her mother. A few weeks after her arrival in London witnessed the decease of that proud woman, in a state of awful unconsciousness as to her own situation. She had been gradually declining, and at length sunk into the arms of death as into a quiet and peaceful slumber.

Alice had been seated by her, during the absence of the Countess, and had imagined that the quiescent state in which she was, was but a refreshing sleep. Soon, however, she became aware of the fact by the countenance of Lady Arlingham, who, on bending over the patient to arrange her pillows, first noted the impress of

death which was on her. Life had indeed flown, along with that immortal part whose ultimate destination we dare not think upon.

The fortunes of her sisters, along with her own unclaimed patrimony, devolved upon Alice, who, now the wealthiest and most lovely widow in the land, hastened her arrangements in England, the sooner to join those dear friends in Ireland to whom her kind and affectionate heart so truly warmed. Lady Arlingham accompanied her thither, for those friends had resolved never again to separate from each other as long as life remained. One tie bound them together—one subject had power to comfort and console them—one memory was left for them to think on, and to love.

A house near to Lindorf Court was taken by Alice, whose chief care and principal delight was the education and society of the little Lindorfs, all of whom she loved affectionately, particularly the little Arthur and the infant Alice, her god-child and own peculiar darling. The cultivation of their young and gentle minds was an

employment and amusement that suited well with her noble and upright one; and ere long she regained her long-lost health and strength, and found in her religious and virtuous projects and occupations a balm and consolation which she never had expected to experience while on earth.

Lady Arlingham lived long, a penitent and a contrite being. Cheered to the last by the piety and affection of Alice, she passed from life to death a meet partaker of those blessings, and that pardon, so bountifully promised to those “who die in the Lord.”

Mr. O’Grady, warned by advancing age and increasing infirmities, was glad to avail himself of the proposal of his wife, and give up his much-loved Kneuchtnanoon to the care of Frederick Mansfield, who, having married to his uncle’s complete satisfaction, was deemed by him worthy to succeed to the enviable possession of his landed property. As Frederick was unavoidably obliged to pass the greater part of his

time in Dublin, he was fortunate enough to gain permission to let Kneuchtnanoon for some years; which being satisfactorily done, Mr. and Mrs. O'Grady returned to their favourite residence, where the old couple pass their declining years happily and contentedly, and oftentimes cheered and gratified by the presence and society of the Lady Alice Lindorf and her beautiful little namesake, who promises fair to equal her lovely instructress in beauty and sweetness of disposition.

The Dudleys, completely satisfied by the kindness of Lady Alice Lindorf, who appointed Mr. Dudley to be her agent, continue much as usual. Miss Charity Dudley has entered the marriage state, and it remains a doubt whether either of her sisters will yet be induced to follow her example.

Mr. Dudley continues indefatigable in new schemes and new inventions; and though, unfortunately, they all fail, "as usual," still he, "as usual," is unceasing in his exertions. Mrs.

Dudley is not one iota less busy and thrifty than in former times, and has received no trifling addition to her cares and solitudes in the birth of some three or four little miniature representations of herself and Mr. Dudley—the infant offspring of Charity, now Mrs. Wiggy.

Peg, the factotum of Dudley Grove, aided by the liberal assistance of Lady Alice Lindorf, has been united to her fellow-servant and assistant, Pat; both of whom, as gate-keepers at Lindorf House, the residence of Alice, feel as happy and contented as they can wish to be.

Many have been the offers of marriage refused by Alice, and many have been the noble aspirants for her hand and heart; but not all the allurements of rank, wealth, and accomplishments can induce a change in the condition of the beautiful and fascinating widow. Secure in her elevated rank and eminent virtues, she passes through life blest and honoured, the purest and most noble of human beings. The Lady Alice Lindorf, endowed with all the gifts and blessings which the world can bestow—the

pattern of piety and of virtue—has not forgotten, in the prosperity and contentment of her present life, the lessons of her youth, or the sufferings and dangers of “The Forsaken.”

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